BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	1 Hulme Hall Avenue Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6LN
U.S. Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel: (703) 241-5608
Australian Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	1 Ivy Street Greenacre, NSW Australia 2190
Mainland Europe Representative	ETTY GITS	Hoboken Straat 559 4826 EJ Breda Holland Tel: 076 - 5719 804
CD's/Records	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 01705 666677
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0181 959 3394
Photographs Editor/ Archivist	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone, Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 1998 remain as:

UK	£8 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£9 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£11.50 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

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EDITORIAL

Well, what a hectic time in the Crosby world since our last issue! The splendid 3-CD set from Ken Barnes of Bing's United Artists material plus the 'Memories' CD gathered tremendous publicity around the anniversary of Bing's death with Ken Barnes being interviewed on countless different radio stations. There were several radio tributes to Bing too and Bert Bishop will review these in the next edition of BING as tapes of some of them did not reach him in time for his article. A full hour's programme about Bing appeared on national radio in the UK and we were also treated to a re-run of the 1972 Parkinson TV show.

The publication of 'Bing Crosby - A Diary of Lifetime' coincided nicely with the twentieth anniversary tributes and the ICC obtained some magnificent publicity from many radio stations in the UK and particularly in Ireland. Melody Radio FM, a London based station, devoted its Showtime Hour to various aspects and recordings of Bing's long career. I was interviewed on Radio Lincolnshire as was Stan White whilst Ken Crossland popped up on Radio Shropshire and Stoke. Greg Van Beek took part in a marvellous 20th. Anniversary Tribute on Station WBKV in West Bend, Wisconsin and news has also come in of a 3 hour tribute by Anthony Di Florio lll on a Philadelphia radio station. Magazines and newspapers played their parts too and extracts are given further on in BING.

Ken Barnes deserves our sincere thanks for his splendid efforts on our behalf over the last few months. The 3-CD set of the United Artists sessions was reviewed in the last edition of BING by Jim Reilly but I cannot let the occasion pass without saying how beautifully this was put together by Ken and Steve Woof of EMI Gold. Marvellous sound with the alternate takes and the studio chatter being special bonuses. The booklet was excellent too and all in all it was a prestige production which deserves to sell well. Ken was interviewed about the album on many local radio stations and also on BBC Radio 2 on the Debbie Thrower Show. Fluent and professional, Ken came over very well and did much to promote Bing's image. You will find an advert for the United Artists set elsewhere in this edition and the name of Magpie Direct Music Ltd. is mentioned. Magpie are a mail order concern and they issue a fascinating 32 page catalogue each month covering our kind of music which is well worth obtaining.

A report on the Leeds meeting appears elsewhere in this edition and amongst some of the 'business' items discussed was life membership. In many clubs, life membership is offered in exchange for ten years subscriptions and broadly our members were in favour of us offering something similar. Before we put this in place, could we seek readers' comments please. The suggested issue of a membership card was also considered but the cost and workload involved in this persuaded us not to proceed. The final business item was whether we should place an advert in 'Variety' magazine each year on the

anniversary of Bing's death as previously organised by John Marshall. A show of hands decided against this proposal but Michael Crampton made the point that if anyone wished to organise this, the club would be very pleased to support it.

The question of Michael Crampton's excessive workload was considered and approval was given for Michael to proceed to get a fax machine for the club and also to look into setting up a site on the Internet. Michael has obtained help from Jim Reilly and Oisin Andrew to distribute the many CDs and LPs which we are selling on behalf of deceased members. Michael and I have also discussed whether the ICC should have a separate Treasurer. In many ways, the roles of Secretary and Treasurer are inextricably linked but if we have a suitably qualified member who is keen to take on the role, please let us know and we can consider whether it would be practicable to make a change to reduce Michael's tasks. I know only too well that a heavy involvement in club activities can sometimes take the pleasure out of one's hobby and if we can spread the tasks around, Michael can continue to enjoy his Bing.

Looking ahead and with succession planning in mind, a change in Editor will be needed one day and a fresh approach periodically is usually beneficial to a organisation as it brings new ideas which are stimulating to all concerned. If we have anyone who would like to start getting involved in the production of the magazine, please let me know. I should mention that a personal computer is essential.

The copy date for the Spring edition of BING is February 25 and may I stress that this is not the day when I want all the contributions to arrive! The earlier I receive articles the better because this time the majority of the contributions arrived in the seven days ending October 25 which caused me considerable problems in getting them put together quickly and obtaining appropriate photographs from Ron Bosley. Despite this, every effort has been made to get this Edition to you before Christmas but whenever you receive it, can I extend Seasons Greetings to you all!

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Warmest seasonal greetings to all members as we celebrate one of the most successful years in the history of our club. Bing has been remembered by the BBC, MCA, United Artists and we owe much to Ken Barnes, Jim Reilly, Leslie Gaylor, Wig Wiggins, Stan White, Maggie Ryan and Ernest Sutkowski for their prodigious efforts to keep Bing's name before the public.

The International Crosby Circle has commemorated the 20th anniversary year in magnificent style with the publication of Malcolm Macfarlane's acclaimed DIARY OF A LIFETIME and we place on record our gratitude to Malcolm, Ron Bosley, Michael OToole and all others who share the credit for this sumptuous book.

A Vacation in The United States

Washington, Denver and Milwaukee were the destinations for the Cramptons for their first US visit and we will always be indebted to the Wiggins and Stankowski families for their friendship, hospitality and guidance whilst we were visiting their homes and local places of interest. Marq Stankowski and his daughter, Marilee, have compiled one of the greatest collections of Crosby sheet music ever assembled in one place and the collection really is a national treasure. I tried, but did not succeed, to look through the collection in the several hours allotted for this joyous task but we are hopeful that some of the rarer items will feature in the pages of BING in future editions. It was a joy whilst out shopping with Wig to visit some of the larger record stores all of which stocked a fair number of Bing Crosby videos. Around 34 in total and too many to bring home! The quality of these NTSC films is exceptional and I strongly recommend them to members. (You will need a PAL/NTSC Video Player to play them)

There is a great deal more that I would like members to share with me about the trip but the Editor will be on my tail if I go on any further.

LEEDS 1997

The 32nd annual event was a great success and the full story will be revealed by Ron Bosley on another page. Here I would like to pay tribute to Ken Barnes, Jim Reilly, Arnold Pope, Mavis Heason, Pat Macfarlane, Joyce Pairpoint and Shaun Crampton. All helped to make this one of the most memorable meetings of recent years and we thank you all.

Member RENATO FAILLACE from Brazil had visited your Secretary a few days before the meeting and gifted £60 towards a fax/answering machine to help with communication and help in easing the intolerable workload of your secretary. Renato proposed to the meeting (in writing) that a machine be bought and this was agreed unanimously. The answering machine/fax is now installed and members are asked to be patient awaiting their reply. Please remember that you are ringing a family home and sometimes we do need our privacy.

NEW MEMBERS

Pleasingly, publicity about the International Crosby Circle continues to circulate on Radio, CD covers and in various newspapers and magazines. From these sources we are delighted to welcome 25 new members who we list below. I realise that many new members have joined us in the USA as well and I hope to supply their names in the next edition.

BRITISH ISLES

Mr. D Heasman (London), Mr. C McIntosh (Renfrew), Mr. J Harman (Herts), Mr. G Saunders (Essex), Mr. A Skurls (London), Mr. D Pidgeon (Surrey), Mr. P Rossiter (Notts), Mr. R Cane (London), Mrs J Rawlings (Kent), Mr. J Higton (Lancs), Mrs M E Gibson (Epping), Mr. P A Harrison (London), Mr. L Boss (Oxon.), Mr D McCarthy (Wilts), Mr. L Miller (Dorset), Mrs H J Moss (Bristol), Mr. A Lee (Sunderland), Mr. A McDonald (Sussex), Mr. A J Waters (W Glam), Mr. T R Gent (Cheshire), Mr. N Buckley (Co Cork), Mrs K Spraggon (Dorset)

AUSTRALIA

Jack Stoner (Christies Beach SA), Lance Gardam (Croydon North Vic), Rod Poynter (St. Cammeray NSW)

DENMARK

Ole Meistrup & Gun Damo found us via the Internet having searched for a Crosby organisation for 3 years! Ole & Gun's enthusiasm brought the couple to Leeds for the annual dinner and they subsequently visited your Secretary along with Etty Gits, Frans van der Kolff and Derek Perkins the day after the AGM. Our warmest greetings to you both.

DONATIONS

The International Crosby Circle is greatly indebted to Ted Burnell for his generosity in making his collection available to club members and we thank Ted for a donation of around £750 to date. Your help and support is of immense help, Ted, and we trust that other members will follow your lead and thus help to ensure the long term future of the club. The sealed bid auction donations are included above and here we wish to thank Tony Strong and John Unwin for their much appreciated support. All successful bids have been acknowledged.

Donations to the Diary Appeal have been most generous too and we have almost covered the UK postal costs so thanks to all members who supported this appeal.

DEATHS

Sadly I report the deaths of Anne Keepin and Mike Astbury. Anne, (the wife of member Percy Keepin) died suddenly only a few days before she was due to travel to

Leeds with Percy to attend the annual meeting. Mike died recently after a short illness.

To their families and friends we extend our sincere condolences.

ENDINGS

1997 has been and continues to be an exceptional year for Crosby enthusiasts. Malcolm's 'Diary of a Lifetime' is an important publication by any standards you care to set and members will be disadvantaged if they do not have access to a copy to check those all important facts about Bing's life and times. Do please buy at least one copy and preferably two so that the project is a total success and we can move on with confidence to future projects.

'Memories' is a beautiful CD and the sound quality is undoubtedly the best ever achieved with transfers of this age. Congratulations to all involved in this enterprise. The United Artists 3 CD set remastered by Ken Barnes is a joy to listen to and no collector should be without this set, it's worth buying just for the sleeve notes and art work. Jonzo 13 contains some of the finest vocal work by Bing (June 1933) and this is another CD which you should not miss. Photographs are exceptional.

Important notice
Members who wish to obtain Jonzo issues 1 to 10 for the special price of £8 each should indicate their willingness to support the entire project by writing to John McNicolas at- PO BOX 212, HARROW, MIDDLESEX HA3 7LD.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 1998 ARE NOW DUE AND I MAKE MY USUAL PLEA FOR EARLY SUBMISSION OF YOUR DUES SO THAT I CAN KEEP THE ACCOUNTING WORKLOAD TO A MINIMUM. Yet again the subs are unchanged thanks to the generous support of so many members.

Until Spring, Aloha.

Michael Crampton

HUMANETTES

Lionel Pairpoint has discovered further information about this obscure short film in the form of a review from Variety magazine of April 29, 1931.

"Humanettes"
Musical Novelty - 10 minutes - "Mayfair", New York.
"Another of the series built on the Bert Levy creation of life-size human heads over the bodies of Punch and Judy dolls, will fit anywhere. This one digresses from the revue routine of some of its predecessors, to attempt a sketch with music. The cast includes the faces of the three Rhythm Boys, Charles Judels, Gus Arnheim and his Orchestra, plus a couple of unnamed 'lookers', one of whom is a blonde. Judels does dialect as a cafe proprietor who has three disconsolate boys as customers. They are the Rhythm lads who do a couple of harmony numbers, then the girl who caused their sorrow shows and Judels falls for her too. Arnheim's face is shown, his band is heard and it's all to an advantage".

Fascinating stuff. I'd love to see this film!

The Jolson, Formby and Crosby Show

This show was presented at the Southport Arts Theatre on Monday nights from July 28 to September 15 and I caught the last performance.

The show starred Ken Goodwin who shot to fame in the TV programme 'The Comedians' in the 1970s with Steve King appearing as Al Jolson and our own Roy Chappell taking the Crosby role. Roy was the opening act with a very pleasant 25 minute slot in which he sang many Bing favourites in an effortless and easy manner. Roy does not attempt to imitate Bing but he does sing Crosby songs in a manner which has been derived from Bing's style. He quickly had the audience joining in with his singing and answering his questions about Crosby films. A very professional and polished performance which got the show off to a first class start. Steve King sang strongly and sounded very much like Al Jolson in his excellent 25 minute act which ended the first half of the show. The second part of the show was devoted to Ken Goodwin who was intended to be the George Formby portion of the bill. To be honest though, Ken did his usual act and what a pleasure to enjoy his 'smut-free' humour which had the audience laughing. I had remembered hearing a very pleasant LP by Ken some years ago at Ken Crossland's house and had noted that his singing too had been born out of Bing's style. As part of his act, Ken sang several cowboy type songs including 'Old Faithful' and 'You Are My Sunshine' as well as a number of George Formby songs. The finale brought back Roy Chappell and Steve King to sing 'Well Did You Evah!' with Ken and m.c. Ian Garry. All in all, a very pleasant show and well done Roy for keeping the Crosby flag flying.

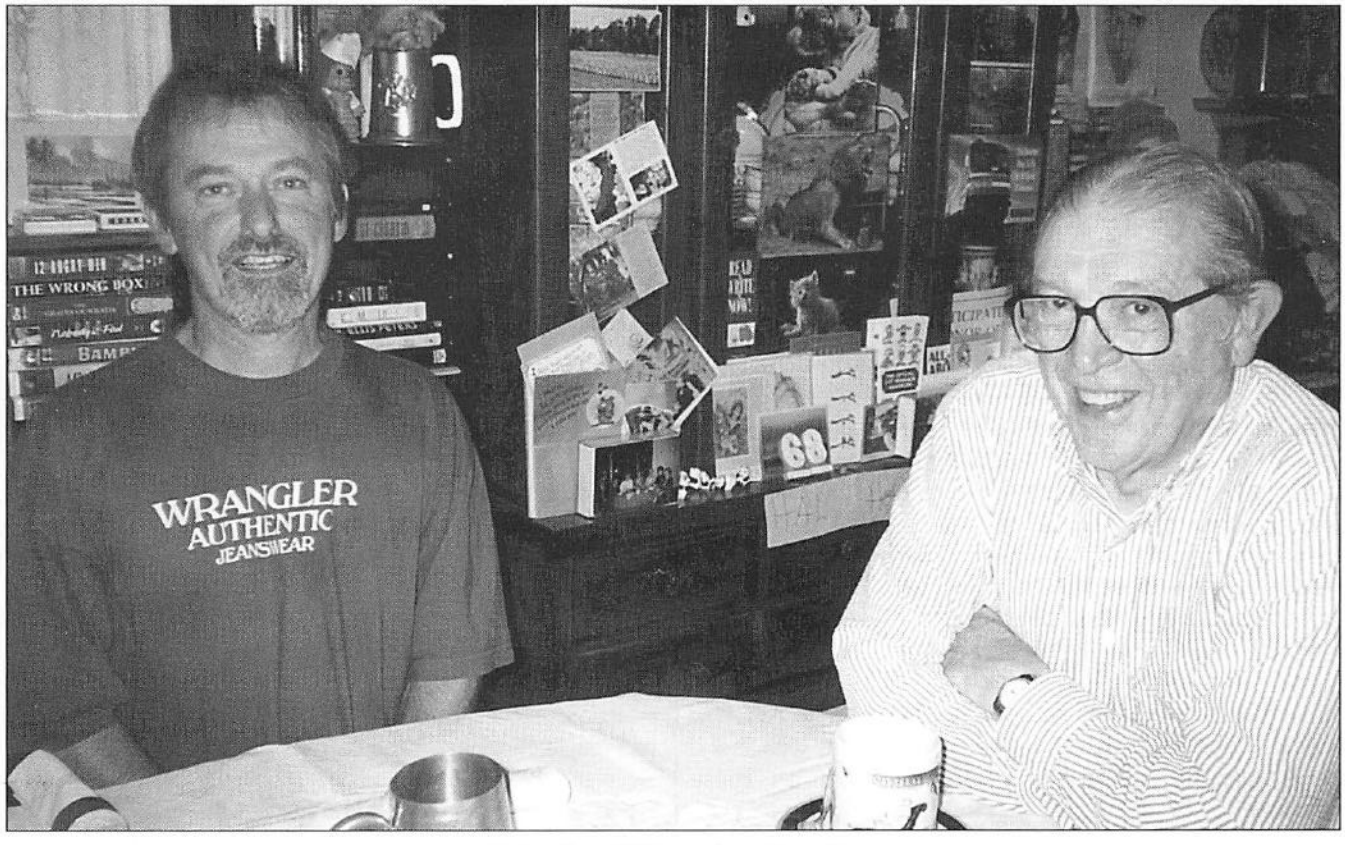
Candle in the Wind

There has been much publicity about this very nice tribute by Elton John to the late Diana, Princess of Wales, selling more than Bing's version of 'White Christmas'. We are all delighted by the success of Elton's single as it will raise a fortune for charities but there does seem to be some confusion about the various claims. Bing's 'White Christmas' sold many millions as a single record but since it has been appearing on LPs and CDs it has sold many millions more. No precise figures seem to be available to the public on its total sales. The recent press publicity states that the Elton John song is the top selling single of all time having just topped the 30 million sold by Bing's 'White Christmas'. We had always seen figures stating that 'White Christmas' had sold over 100 million and I wondered where the 30 million figure had come from. Had someone worked out how many 'White Christmas' had sold as a single, before allowing for its appearances

on albums? In fact, I suspect the figure was simply taken from 'Joel Whitburn's Pop Memories 1890 - 1954' as on page 631 an 'estimate' is made of the biggest selling records between 1890 and 1954. 'White Christmas' is estimated to have sold 30 million +. I suspect it is rather a big plus !! Presumably MCA could provide a better estimate and if they did I feel sure that we would see that 'White Christmas' is still the best selling record of all time.

BING IN THE USA

This past July my wife, Laura, and I had the great pleasure of meeting and entertaining the ICC's Honorary Secretary / Treasurer, Michael Crampton and his family (wife Judith and sons Iain and Shaun) on their first visit to the United States. Although the summer weather in the Washington, D.C. area was very hot and humid, the Crampton and Wiggins families did manage to do their best where both Bing and tourism were concerned, before the Cramptons departed for cooler days in Colorado and Wyoming prior to returning to Leeds via Milwaukee and Chicago. As a result of their visit, we now can put faces together with the trans-Atlantic voices that conduct ICC business, hopefully to the benefit of all members on both sides of the water. On behalf of Michael and myself, I would like to thank Laura and Judith for their demonstrated patience and understanding during the visit where Bing matters were concerned. And by the way, I was pleased to be able to tell Michael while he was here that the American / Canadian ICC membership now numbers 275 staunch Bing supporters — a number which continues to grow on a regular basis.



Michael and Wig take a breather.

BING ON THE INTERNET

Fellow ICC member Steve Lewis of Kansas City, Missouri has created an outstanding Internet site dedicated to Bing's life and career. Continually expanded and improved, Steve's website has become so extensive that he now refers to it as an internet 'museum' rather than just a 'page'. At my request, Steve has written a detailed article about his extensive work on Bing's behalf, which can be found elsewhere in this issue. Other ICC members with access to the Internet should visit Steve's site often for his latest update on information about Bing. Steve's most welcome efforts also are helping to attract new members to the ICC and, in particular, younger fans who did not have the opportunity to enjoy Bing's career "The (First) Time Around".

NEW FESTIVAL FILMS GOLF VIDEO

Fellow ICC members Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall of Festival Films in Minnesota, who already have provided Crosby collectors with many excellent videos featuring Bing over the past years, are at work on yet another unique tape which they plan to make available by Christmas. Titled "Golfing With Bing and Bob", their

new video will include such rare items as Bing's golfing shorts "Swing With Bing" (1940) and "Don't Hook Now" (1942), as well as scenes from several of Bing's famous National Pro-Am tournaments at Pebble Beach, California. Ordering details will be provided just as soon as they become available from Festival Films.

BING CROSBY IN THE 40's

Another fellow ICC member and researcher-extraordinaire, Gary Hamann of Los Angeles, has completed a companion book to his best-selling "Bing Crosby in the 30's" from last year. Twice the size, and with many more pages than his first book on Bing, Gary's new Bing Crosby in the 40's is certain to be even more popular with collectors worldwide. A limit of 100 copies have been made available to the ICC, at the special discount price of $28.50 (post-paid) in the United States and Canada, and £19 sterling in the United Kingdom. See the enclosed flyer for ordering details for this excellent new book about Bing.

ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT BING IS COMING

Crosby collectors who purchased the recent book about the 'Road' films ("The Road to Box Office: the Seven Film Comedies of Crosby, Hope and Lamour" by Randall Mielke) can look forward to a very much better history and analysis of the intrepid trio's multi-media journeys together in a forthcoming book by fellow ICC member Mike Ritter of Mesa, Arizona. Editorial cartoonist for the Tribune newspaper group (and a first class-artist, I can assure you), Mike has been working for a number of years on his own book about the radio, movie and television careers of our three famous friends. He has undertaken extensive research and conducted many direct personal interviews with those who worked with Bing, Bob and Dorothy on the various films and shows that they did together.

My wife, Laura, and I have enjoyed having Mike Ritter as a guest in our home over the past two years, as well as the opportunity to review his work-in-progress on those occasions. Titled "Crosby, Hope and Lamour: The Complete Road Atlas" Mike's book will be handsomely mounted and profusely illustrated. In my opinion, it will be one of the best-written, and most thoroughly-researched of any book to date about Bing's career. And as an occasional contributor and informal editor of the chapters that Mike has already completed, I know that ICC members will welcome his forthcoming contribution to the world of Crosby scholarship. Let's hope that "The Complete Road Atlas" itself will be completed and published just as soon as possible.

OTHER BING AUTHORS JOIN THE ICC

I would like to welcome two additional members of the exclusive group of "Bing authors" who recently joined the ICC. Edward (Ed) Mello of San Francisco, co-author of the pioneering and indispensable discography "Crosby on Record (1926-1950)", is now an active ICC participant and has found his interest in Crosby matters very much renewed by our BING magazine. And Laurence (Larry) Zwisohn of Los Angeles, author of "Bing Crosby - A Lifetime of Music" which was published in 1978, has rejoined the ICC after an absence of several years. Larry has informed me that he plans to compile and publish a thoroughly-detailed discography of Bing's recordings in the next year-or-so. It is a pleasure to have Ed and Larry as part of our growing ICC family.

MCA's "BING'S GOLD RECORDS"

Vice-President Andy McKaie of MCA Records has now released an outstanding addition to the world of Bing's compact discs in the new "Bing's Gold Records" collection (MCAD-11719). Available from your local music store, this CD features excellent re-mastering of all of Bing's Decca million-sellers by sound engineer and fellow ICC member Steve Lasker of Venice, California. It also has one of the most striking booklets yet for a Bing CD album with a superb drawing of Bing on the front cover by another ICC member, artist Jon Oye of Chicago. And with liner notes by yours truly, I think it is safe to say that the ICC has done well by the Old Groaner this time around, thank you very much. Let's hope that the current record-buying public agrees, and for a long time to come!

BING AND LES PAUL

Steve Lasker has also alerted me to another forthcoming release from MCA (for which Steve again is responsible for the compilation and remastering) of the Decca recordings by Les Paul and His Trio. Included will be all of Bing's Decca songs with Les Paul, most of which will be new to CD, plus both the 1946 and 1947 versions of "Gotta Get Me Somebody to Love" (but not the unissued alternate Take C from 1946—that would have been one too many versions of the same song for one CD!).

An interesting fact verified by Steve Lasker for this project is that two tracks heretofore credited to Les Paul in all of Bing's published discographies actually were made with Dave Barbour on guitar, rather than Les Paul. Therefore, collectors should correct their books to show that 'Day by Day' (L-3965, Take A) and 'Prove It By the Things You Do' (L-3966, Take A) which were recorded on January 10,1945 and issued as Decca 18746 in the United States, featured Bing with an instrumental quartet (not trio) comprised of Buddy Cole (piano), Dave Barbour (guitar), Phil Stephens (bass) and Nick Fatool (drums), plus Mel Torme and his Mel-Tones vocal group.

BING ON TELEVISION

The past four months witnessed something of a slowdown

in the number of Bing's films shown on nation-wide television networks in the United States. None of the cable channels featuring classic Hollywood movies made any effort to mark the twentieth anniversary of Bing's passing. Nonetheless, a number of Bing's films were shown from time-to-time during this period, including several which are seldom seen on television these days. The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) presented Bing's 1956 remake of "Anything Goes" with Donald O'Connor, Jeanmaire and Mitzi Gaynor in September, while the Cinemax cable network carried the almost-forgotten 1966 remake of "Stagecoach". And in July, and again in October, the Turner Classic Movies cable system broadcast Bing's rare 1957 drama with Inger Stevens, "Man on Fire". Here is the complete list of Bing's films that were shown in the last quarter in the United States:

July 1997

Blue Skies - The Country Girl - The Emperor Waltz - Going My Way - High Society - Let's Make Love - Man on Fire - Say One For Me - Sgt. Bilko Presents Bing Crosby (Phil Silvers TV Show)

August 1997

The Country Girl - High Society - High Time - Road to Bali - Road to Rio - Say One For Me - Mack Sennett Shorts

September 1997

Anything Goes (1956) - Going My Way - Let's Make Love - Little Boy Lost - Robin and the Seven Hoods - Riding High - Scared Stiff (cameo) - Stagecoach (1966)

October 1997

Anything Goes (1956) - The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad

BING'S NEW ORLEANS CONNECTION

Lionel Pairpoint's discovery of Bing's September 1976 visit to New Orleans, which was reported in BING 116, has aroused the interest of our ICC 'Bing Broadcaster' in the Crescent City, Ron Cannatella. Ron is busy researching that visit for further details, as well as another story about Bing's connection with events and people down New Orleans way. Ron already has turned up a fascinating folio of photographs from Bing's unusual trip to New Orleans during the last year of his life, which I hope can be featured in a future issue of BING. And he is hot-on-the-trail of more information about Bing's concert performance there during the Archdiocesan Charities Ball.

On another subject that goes back another forty years to 1936, Ron has discovered some very interesting information about Bing's personal friendship with well-known New Orleans trumpeter and jazz vocalist, Louis Prima. It appears that Benny Goodman's famous 1937 big band classic, "Sing, Sing, Sing", actually was first written by Louis Prima in 1936 under the title "Sing, BING, Sing" — at the time that Louis was appearing with Bing in Paramount's "Rhythm on the Range" in Hollywood! Stay tuned for further developments.

In closing, I would like to wish all of my fellow ICC members in the United States and Canada — and all around the world —the very best holiday season, and a happy 1998, until time for BING 118.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

"Merry Christmas Baby - Holiday Music - From Bing to Sting"

Our statistician, Jim Kukura, is at it again!

This book was already reviewed by Malcolm Macfarlane in BING #113, and Malcolm did extract some very interesting narrative excerpts from the book. After I received my own copy for Christmas 1996, I immediately saw an opportunity for yet another statistical comparison which would reinforce our conclusion that Bing is the most successful and popular recording artist of all time. The authors worked hard at making this into a book, and created a lot of arbitrary and irrelevant categories of holiday music that no true Bing Crosby fan would like to see Bing associated with (Risque Holiday Music??). But there is still enough reasonable data there to allow us to make a good case for Bing as a top (I would say the top) recording artist of Holiday / Christmas music. To that end, I present the following comparisons from the book.

The book has a list, by artist, of 365 Holiday songs, ostensibly one for each day of the year (in case you listen to Christmas music all year long). There does not seem to be any rhyme or reason for the 365 choices (quite a few of which I've never heard of), except for the judgement of the authors. In descending order, these are the artists with the most songs listed.

Bing Crosby	8 songs
Gene Autry	5 songs
Frank Sinatra	4 songs
Nat 'King' Cole	3 songs

In the book's "Ten Top-Selling Christmas Singles" category, Bing gets the number one position with 'White Christmas', but no other listing in this category. No artist has more than one listing in this category (they list their source as Billboard magazine), but I really have to take exception to some of the recordings they are presenting as belonging in the ten top-selling Christmas singles. They list at #9 the 1966 Earl Grant recording of 'Silver Bells', which did not even break the Top 100 charts. At #8 is the 1954 Drifters recording of 'White Christmas', which did chart and is considered a classic R & B Christmas recording, but it is not recognised as a million selling record. At #4 is the 1961 Charles Brown 'Please Come Home For Christmas', which also charted, and was credited as reaching a million selling single in 1968. How Bing's 'Silent Night / Adeste Fideles' (theorised as a potential bigger seller than Bing's 'White Christmas' and credited as quickly selling 7 million copies) wasn't ranked probably means that the contents of this category, and possibly all the categories in this book, were determined at the discretion of the authors.

In the book's "Ten Best Christmas Pop Records" (authors' choices?), Bing is the only artist with two listings, 'White Christmas', and 'I'll Be Home For Christmas'. After reading the entire book, (it is a fairly small book), it seemed that Bing was probably referred to more than any other artist. By my count, Bing is referred to at least 32 times in the text of the book (not counting lists and album cover photos), and while I did not take the time to make a similar count for any other artist, if Bing is not mentioned more than any other artist, he must be close to the top.

Well, that's it. Not a statistical comparison of seismic proportion, but still one in which the accomplishments of Bing Crosby shine brightly. I would think that it would be obvious to most people that Bing is undoubtedly the most successful recording artist of Christmas music. I know that Billboard magazine does have a chart category for Christmas music, but I am not sure what years it covers and where that information would be published. The Billboard Christmas charts are referred to in Joel Whitburn's "Top Pop Singles - 1955 -1990" book, so it sounds like I have a challenge for a more definitive, and more statistically accurate, future article about Bing and Christmas music.

Jim Kukura

So This Is How It Feels to Finally Complete a Full Set of Wisdens?

by John Bignell (on finishing the final part of THE CROSBY COLLECTION)

There have been one hundred and thirty four issues of 'WISDEN', the bible of the cricket enthusiast, and I have heard that those lucky souls who have a complete set (it was first published in 1864) inevitably feel something has gone out of their lives when they achieve the completion of their task. Well, although I am a long way from reaching that stage (to date I am just over a third of the way to the target) I now lay claim to similar feelings of accomplishment (and sadness). Which is a rather cumbersome and roundabout way of saying that I have now reached a similar goal - that of obtaining a complete set of 'REYNOLDS', the definite work of the esteemed 'FRED' in which he quite brilliantly analyses every commercial recording of Bing Crosby from 'I've Got The Girl' in 1926 to 'Once In a While' in 1977. In Volume 5, which covers 1961 to 1977, Fred completes his mammoth task and the same high standard of writing has been maintained as was evident from the very beginning.

Fred Reynolds is what I term an 'honest' writer who never lets his obvious admiration for his hero's career prevent him from reviewing each and every recording session strictly on its merits. In the case of Bing Crosby, of course, that means applying the highest possible standards and any deviation from that pinnacle is faithfully recorded (no pun intended). There is no possible doubt that in a fifty plus years career there have to be peaks and troughs. It is surely a lasting testimony to the greatness of Crosby that the peaks outnumber the troughs by a considerable margin.

In the 'glory years' of say 1931 to 1942 you can dip into Fred Reynolds' Part 1 and 2 and find hundreds of examples of descriptive writing which is ecstatic in its praise of the combination of the Crosby voice and the genius of the songwriters of the era. Throughout the Second World War years, the rest of the 1940s and the whole of the 1950s, Bing's maturing and mellowing voice, aided by his incomparable technique, enabled him to hold off all challengers with the possible exception of Frank Sinatra.

In his final volume, Fred freely acknowledges the restraints which the passing of time had put upon the Crosby vocal chords and it is clear that he does not give his unqualified approval to everything that Bing recorded in his later years. Consider Fred's comments about 'Hey Jude', recorded in 1968:

> *"It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand why Crosby chose to record this song. To call the lyrics banal would be complimentary to this ungrammatical gibberish.....The suggestion that he should make a sad song better is something that should not have been so obviously ignored.....Bing commences a ludicrous 'pom, pom, pom, pom-pom-pom'.... is nothing more than throwing in the towel in admission of defeat by mediocrity. The question remains.....not whether Crosby sang well but why he sang at all!"*

Words and music by Lennon and McCartney and of The Beatles, Fred observes in a damning indictment, "under the auspices of Brian Epstein their manager and George Martin their record producer, they became the most successful and influential rock group in history as a true reflection of the essence of contemporary music and mores."

On the other hand, Fred Reynolds waxes almost lyrical about Bing's session with the Alan Cohen Orchestra in July and August 1976. 'Nevertheless' 'As Time Goes By', 'Once in a While', 'Old Fashioned Love' all come in for unstinting praise, a fact which pleased the writer of this humble review who has always considered this one of the best of Bing's later albums.

Some of the very best of Fred Reynolds' writings in this final volume are contained in a Preface, and in the summary of the years 1961-1977 and the Epilogue. Here a few examples:

In the Preface, Fred points out that at the beginning of the 1960s, Bing was in his fifty eighth year - the twilight of his career.

> *"The art of popular singing including his own unique style was being subjected to the barrage of hype and mediocrity that was increasingly creating a new type of 'pop' market foisted on the pubescent and the unwitting to replace the superior music and songs that had preceded it.....after the*

mid-1960s Crosby, while not a spent force, had some lean years. For about ten years his activities were much reduced but his last three years saw renewed endeavour and he recorded several albums the last session being held only three days before his death..... His death created a void in popular singing that will never be filled."

And in the summary at the end of the book, Fred expands the theme of Bing's tremendous final three years in moving words:

"Crosby made, with the support and enthusiasm of British record producer Ken Barnes, no less than one hundred and forty recordings in a phenomenal resurgence for a septuagenarian in a market swamped with tacky mediocrity and overtly sex-based rock 'n' roll led by Presley, The Beatles and others.....the rock festivals at Woodstock USA (1969) and the Isle of Wight UK (1970) both had banality enough to attract and hypnotise into mass hysteria philistine crowds of more than half a million among which the sordid scenes of beatniks, squalor and drugs epitomised the hippy culture that overturned traditional values. It was against such backgrounds of cacophony and gibberish that popular music, born of folk songs, so rapidly and relentlessly declined."

In a four page epilogue Fred ended his epic 'tour de force'. Here are just some of his memorable lines:

"Thus he died having defined popular singing in all its ramifications.....he became the apotheosis of an age that no longer exists, of popular music before it was degraded. His landmark talent was inevitably described in superlatives.....'Genius' is now so readily ascribed to anyone in the public eye who has more than a modicum of talent that the appellation has become devalued. One can imagine how uneasily the 'genius' singers, comedians, footballers and entertainment celebrities would rub shoulders with Shakespeare, Mozart, Rembrandt, Darwin, Einstein and Newton in an overcrowded Valhalla. 'Legend' seems to be an automatic tribute to anyone in the entertainment world who has been popular for a few years or has had the misfortune to have died young. Within popular definition, therefore, and with no regard for its real meaning, one cannot deny that Crosby easily qualifies, having crystallised into the status long before his death. The truth is less outraged, however, by the commonly misapplied 'greatest': his voice was so mellifluous and his technique so accomplished that....when he is so hailed there is no debasement of adjectival currency.....the accolade may be used without qualm or embarrassment."

"Bing Crosby possessed a delicacy of feeling that was appreciated by all who knew him and his ego was in inverse proportion to his professional status."

"He achieved an immortal name in the art of popular music by making a major contribution to its development in the twentieth century. As with all our friends remembrance brings him back to life and, additionally, we have the hallmark recordings of the greatest natural singing voice of all."

When we are all long gone, maybe sometime well into the second half of the 21st century, and some enthusiastic new biographer of popular singing of the 20th Century, attempts to define the genius of Bing Crosby, I doubt he or she will be able to improve on the above. Thanks, Fred, for a great job, well done. It has given me as much pleasure as anything since I joined the ICC a quarter of a century ago. Ah well! Back to the Wisden hunting.

John Bignell

(Editor: Thank you, John for a great tribute to Fred's marvellous books. Some of the comments expressed cut across one of BING magazine's guiding principles that we do not criticise other singers and other types of music but I have allowed them on this occasion as they are quotes from a published work. Please see the Letters pages for other comments about 'Hey Jude'.)

BOOKS 'N' BING

1. TRAM - THE FRANK TRUMBAUER STORY Written by Philip R. Evans, Larry Kiner and William Trumbauer. Studies in Jazz, No. 18 published by Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey and The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen N.J., and London in 1994.

I only became aware of this book a few months ago when corresponding with our new member Philip Evans about entries in my diary of Bing's life. Philip was a co-author of the book 'Bix - Man and Legend' and he told me about his book about Frankie Trumbauer which he wrote in conjunction with the late Larry Kiner with additions from Frank's grandson, William Trumbauer. I hastened to Manchester Library for a copy and after several weeks wait, I was able to borrow the book which had been obtained from the British Library.

Frank Trumbauer was one of the most influential of the early jazz saxophonists and he had a close association with Bing for several years. The book came about from a contact between Trumbauer's widow, Mitzi, her son Bill and Philip Evans in 1967. Two years research was undertaken but then Mitzi asked for the project to be discontinued as it was proving too painful to her to remember the past. Eventually, following the death of his father Bill, Frank Trumbauer's grandson, Bill Junior, contacted Philip Evans again in 1989 to revive the project. Philip and Larry Kiner had just completed a collaboration on *Al Jolson: A Bio-Discography* and they

agreed to collaborate again on a book on Trumbauer. Bill Junior made available his grandfather's memorabilia which included memos that Frank had written in 1953 as a prelude to a possible autobiography. All of these memos are contained within the book so that the reader can have a feeling of Frank commenting on the events described during his life. The authors also had access to a diary that Frank kept for 1928.

The book runs to 821 pages with the first 274 pages tracing Trumbauer's life from his birth on May 30,1901 to his death in 1956. He started out as a musician in the Navy in 1918 and after serving with several bands following his honourable discharge from the forces, he joined the Ray Miller Orchestra at the Paradise Club in Newark in 1924. When he left Miller in July 1925, he formed his own orchestra recruiting one Bix Beiderbecke as his cornet player. After disbanding his orchestra in May 1926, Trumbauer and Beiderbecke joined the Jean Goldkette Band. Trumbauer became the leader of the Goldkette Orchestra later that year and the troupe enjoyed considerable critical success until Goldkette disbanded it for financial reasons. It was on October 27, 1927 that Trumbauer and Beiderbecke joined the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and they quickly carved out niches for themselves. Some great records were made and as we know the young Bing featured in many of these. The details from Trumbauer's diary help to usefully expand our knowledge of Bing's activities at that time.

An early Trumbauer recording with Whiteman (and Bing). The rare label was supplied by Peter Haizelden.

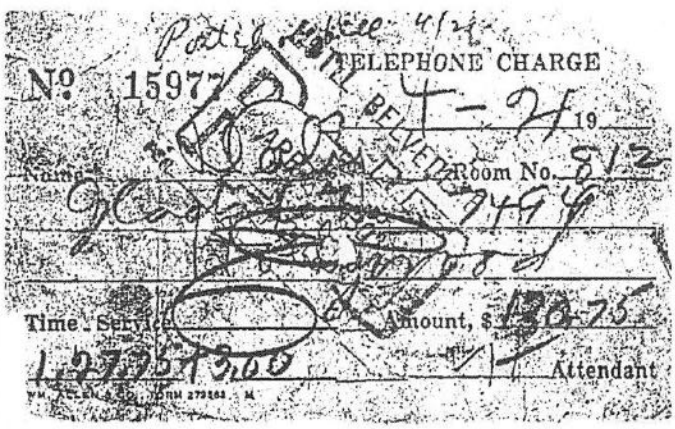
Trumbauer left Whiteman in 1932 to front his own band again but he returned to 'Pops' in November 1933 for several years. He then spent time with Georgie Stoll before setting up his own orchestra again in 1938. In the early 1940s, Trumbauer, who had been a keen pilot for some time, gave up his musical career to be an Assistant Aeronautical Inspector in Des Moines, Iowa before becoming a test pilot with North American Aviation in order to help with the war effort. After the war, Trumbauer joined the Raymond Paige Orchestra for several months before going back into aviation where he remained until his death.

After the narrative, we have a most thorough 274 page discography which in turn is followed by a breathtakingly detailed 122 page chronology of Frank Trumbauer's life. The final section of the book is a 130 page song index of songs performed by Trumbauer on radio and record.

This is a most comprehensive and lovingly researched book. Fascinating to Bing followers because of the details given, it includes new information about the final days of the Rhythm Boys association with Paul Whiteman. After the filming of **The King of Jazz** in 1930, Whiteman took his troupe up the West Coast and after a concert in Portland, Oregon he returned to New York. Most books tell us that Bing and the Rhythm Boys left Whiteman in Portland and that they returned to California but Trumbauer tells a different story. After the final performance in Portland on April 15, the band headed back to New York. Trumbauer continues:

> *Bing and I were now rooming together at the Belvedere Hotel, and decided to do the town one night. As the evening wore on, Bing suddenly realised that he had to call Dixie in Hollywood, and rushed back to the hotel to make the call. Sometime later that night, I walked into our hotel room and found Bing sound asleep with the receiver in his hand. I shook him and he began, "hello, hello." I never really knew what happened except that the telephone call cost me $130.75! I still have the bill.*

During my correspondence with Philip Evans, he kindly gave me a copy of the said bill which, although not very clear, we now reproduce by kind permission of Philip and the Trumbauer family. The number dialled by Bing was Gladstone 7494.



Early in May, the Whiteman band were on stage at the Roxy Theatre in New York alongside the premiere of **The King of Jazz** and then after their final Old Gold radio show, Whiteman slimmed the organisation down, dispensing with several members and imposing pay cuts on the remainder. Probably this is when Bing and the Rhythm Boys left Whiteman to return to California. We are carrying out further research in an attempt to verify the facts.

Philip's book adds vital new information to Bing's life story. Incidentally, Philip has collaborated with Steve and

Stan Hester on a book about Red Nicholls which should be published any day and this will contain a staggering amount of information about the recording dates of Bing's radio shows. Philip has also written another book on Bix Beiderbecke which may be published by the time you read this. We are delighted to have Philip as a member of the ICC.

2. ROAD TO BOX OFFICE

We reviewed this new book in the last BING and since then, Wig has sent us a copy of another review from 'Past Times', a nostalgia entertainment newsletter. This reads as follows:

A Road Map for Hope, Crosby and Lamour Fans

"Among the most enjoyable films of the '40s are the 'Road' pictures starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. Surprisingly, there's never been a book written specifically about this series, but Randall G. Mielke has addressed that with **Road to Box Office** (McFarland: 184 pages, hardcover; 20 illustrations; $37.50 post-paid). It's a pleasant little book, and Mielke's affection for the series is evident on every page. The seven Road pictures from 1940's 'Road to Singapore' to the 'Hong Kong' swan song of 1962 each receive a chapter. These are prefaced by two sections detailing how Hope and Crosby's personal and professional lives entwined from their meeting in 1932, and how the Paramount powers-that-be finally decided to capitalise on the rapport between the two stars. Full cast and credit listings are given for each film. Almost half of the book is devoted to five chapters at the Road's end, one detailing trips that were never taken, another analysing the unique qualities of the series, and the final three giving overviews of Crosby, Hope and Lamour's screen work off the Road.

It's a straightforward, informative book, but it's not the definitive work on Hope and Crosby or the Road series. One would think that 'Variety Girl' (1947), an all-star picture in which Bob and Bing do a golfing routine and sing a song called 'Harmony', would merit more than a couple of sentences. The plots of several films are not fully described (although Mielke's all-purpose description of "The boys are in a jam.... and they have to clown their way out" nearly suffices). The author appears not to have interviewed surviving participants (a Bibliography credits 31 earlier books as sources). There's not a lot of hard information about the productions (shooting dates, for example) and occasionally, an anecdote or quote sounds like something fabricated for a studio press release. Mielke seems unsure as to how much the films deviate from their scripts, some of which must surely be available for comparison. (There are, however, some descriptions of unfilmed scenes, notably a different finish for 'Road to Utopia'.) While there are some references to Hope-Crosby radio appearances, more about these, and about the pair's recordings for Decca and Liberty, would have been useful. Still, a pleasant recollection of some memorable journeys. (Available from McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640; (800) 253-2187)."

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Peter Burgis, PO Box 1660, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444, Australia
FOR SALE

"Australian pressed Bing rarities, including 'Thine Alone' (DLA 1068-A), a take only issued on Decca (Aust) Y-5509; and 'Angels of Mercy' (DLA 2842-A), which was only ever issued in Australia on Decca Y-5771. Write to the above address for details.

I can also supply copies of a 3-CD set entitled 'The Australian Wartime Collection' issued in 1995 which contains 72 songs by Aussie artists 1939-1945 from 78s and radio programs, amongst which is Bing singing 'Buy Another Bond Today', recorded Sept/Oct 1943 and only issued in 78 rpm format in Australia to help the war effort. Each three-CD set is new (with fine booklet) and costs £15, which includes air mail delivery."

Jack Souther, 2011-44th. Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116, USA
AUCTION: Ends Jan 15, 1998

Serious Collectors only - Additional rarities for auction
Original 16" Transcriptions - Movie Soundtrack records featuring Bing Crosby vocals - 33.3 r.p.m. - Shellac
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2. "Reaching for the Moon" - 1930 United Artists Corp. featuring Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Bebe Daniels. One record (not complete S/T). Record #4248/#425 reels 5 & 7. Contains Bing part, singing "When the Folks High Up Do The Mean Lowdown". Ex. condition.
16" Transcription - Public Service Record - 1933 or '34 - 33.3 r.p.m. - shellac - one sided - Ex. condition.
1. Bing Crosby and Jimmie Grier Orch. Child Welfare Program. Freeman-Lang L 7168
a. Bing vocal - "Fare Thee Well to Harlem"
b. Instrumental - "Moonlight Parade"
c. Bing chit chat with John McIntyre
d. Bing vocal - "With My Eyes Wide Open I'm Dreaming"
e. Instrumental - "Of Thee I Sing"
Many 10", 12", 16" publicity radio promos for Bing's movies. Speak-O-Phone (Aluminium recording - 1 sided) 12" 78 r.p.m. (Rehearsal check - NBC Dec 3, 1935) "With All My Heart". Ex. condition.
Decca 10" - 78 r.p.m. test pressing (1946) Bing and Bob Crosby Christmas greetings to their aunt, parody of "You Forgot Your Gloves". Many non-commercial rarities and hundreds of commercial Bings, all labels, all sizes.

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX

Ken put together a collection of Bing tracks entitled 'Early Film Songs Collection' for another nostalgia magazine and his cassette received a very nice review. Ken is very happy to make the cassette available at £4 (inc. postage) and SAE to him for details. Also as we went to print, Ken advised us that he had just received from Anthony Di Florio III in Philadelphia, a three hour radio tribute to Bing which was broadcast on 10th. October. All those who would like a copy of this fine programme should contact Ken.

Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Rare Bing Crosby items for sale: Rare Cremo/Woodbury and film outtakes, alternate masters, V discs, LPs, 10" LPs, many unissued tracks, radio shows, rehearsal broadcasts etc. Large private collection of complete broadcasts and rarities of Al Jolson, LPs, CD and video.

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Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA (tel. 01708-445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (PAL format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

Mrs. M. G. Bishop, Dore, Wardle Rd., Highbridge, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 6HQ

Mrs. Bishop has nine Bing 78s for disposal and if anyone in the locality is interested, please contact her direct.

C.H. Steanson, 4 Blackthorn Drive, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear NE28 9AH (tel. 0191-2624304)

Mr. Steanson seeks the 12" Columbia 78 DX898 featuring Bing singing 'St. Louis Blues' on one side and Duke Ellington playing 'Creole Love Call' on the other. Contact him direct if you have a copy for sale.

Ben Clinkenbeard, 5553 Westwood Northern Boulevard, Apt.#7, Cincinnati, Ohio 45428, USA

"I would like to purchase new or used copies of the following compact discs: New Tricks - Songs I Wish I Had Sung - A Musical Autobiography."

John Joyce, 9 Midhurst Grove, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 8XN

"I have American Decca boxed 17 EPs of Bing's Autobiography with booklet and key. £25 or nearest offer or I will swap this for a copy of 'Le Bing'."

Mervyn Thomas, 52 Gratwicke Rd., Worthing, Sussex BN11 4BH (tel. 01903-201784)

WANTED

Boswell Sisters in 'You Ought To Be In Pictures' - Conifer CHD 136 - LP or CD or Cassette.

Neil Robinson, Crosby Lodge, 19 Alder Grove, Stapenhill, Burton-On-Trent DE15 9QR (Tel. 01283 533845)

Neil has a copy of 'Call Me Lucky' (hardback by Muller - 1953) which he is happy to pass on to anyone who wants it for £5 (inc. postage). Telephone him if you want it.

Michael Crampton, 19 Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 2NL

Back Copies of BING

Issue nos. 94, 95, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 110 and 113 are available for £2 each plus postage. Order direct from Michael.

Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE 13 1EQ

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BINGANG, the official magazine of the American Club Crosby, is published twice yearly and is available from Ken Crossland. Annual subscription £11. For free sample copy, write to Ken enclosing a 36p stamp.

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(HomePage:http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/pennvalley/biology/lewis/crosby/bing.htm)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257)

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,
John Wright, 17 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Australia

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU
This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis. The magazine includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £10 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

The Sammy Davis Jr Association, c/o Paul Iacovou, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

International Friends of Gordon Macrae, c/o Mrs. Pat Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society, 11 Kierhill Rd., Balloch, Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 9BH

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY

Alma Cogan Appreciation Society, c/o Stephen Woods, 9 Canterbury Avenue, Bowerham, Lancaster LA1 4AU

The International Petula Clark Society, c/o Terry Young, 38 Elmley Way, Margate, Kent CT9 4ES

Seasonal Greetings from some of our Australian members. Bruce Saunders and David Currington are at the front and they are surrounded by (l to r) Alvan Morton, Stuart Lord, Richard Malpas, John Dever, Lachlan McLean and Neil Colombari

KEITH PARKINSON'S
CELLULOID CROSBY

For me, 1997 marks the fortieth anniversary of **High Society.** Released in the U.S.A. in the summer of 1956, the film had its British premiere at the end of that year with general release following in the spring of 1957. It reached my local cinema, the Derby in Burscough Bridge, in the late summer of 1957. The Derby had a policy of two day bookings with the more prestigious films being reserved for the Friday/Saturday slot. I saw **High Society** on the Friday evening and then returned for the second house Saturday showing. In those days, by the time films reached the sticks you caught them for the last time before they were made available for isolated Sunday showings or re-issue on double bills. Either way, there was a considerable time lag before they could be viewed again and **High Society** was one film which was as entertaining the second (and third and fourth) time round as it was when I saw it for the first time.

In the 1950s, the Cinema Exhibitors Association effectively barred films from appearing on television for ten years from their initial cinema showing. In fact, **High Society** was not shown on British television until the 1970s. In the intervening years, the only way to check that it had not lost any of its charm was to catch it on one of its re-issue outings. The last time I saw it on the big screen was in Stockport in 1969 when it shared a double bill with **Gigi**. The arrival of video tapes in the 1980s made re-acquaintance far easier but the excitement of sitting in a crowded (and usually smoke filled) auditorium can never be replaced by the isolated living room experience, even with the advent of superior laser disc reproduction.

From the above, you'll gather that **High Society** has been part of my life throughout the last forty years. Forty one years to be strictly accurate because it was in the autumn of 1956 that I first heard the songs from the film. Radio Luxembourg had a Tuesday evening 10pm slot called *The Capitol Show* and in September 1956 they devoted the full thirty minutes to playing selections from

the soundtrack album. Since then those songs have been the most accessible of all Bing's film recordings. There were initial 78 and 45 issues together with mono and stereo soundtrack albums. An open reel tape to tape issue followed to cater for the growth of domestic tape recorder ownership. In the mid-sixties an 8-track cartridge issue was followed by release on audio cassette and the album became an early release on compact disc when that format began to take over as the standard music reproduction format. I never saw the soundtrack on the shortlived DAT release lists but the **High Society** recordings have been in the record catalogues in one format or another since initial release. They have been part of the audio revolution from the dark ages of shellac to the current state of the art digital technology. The advent of video resulted in the film appearing on tape as one of the initial releases for sale from the M-G-M catalogue. Would anyone argue that it has become Bing's best selling album, albeit he had to share credit with Sinatra, Grace Kelly, Louis Armstrong and Celeste Holm?

Producer Sol C. Siegel knew that **M-G-M** would be watching the performance of **High Society** very closely because it was his first film for that studio after moving from 20th Century-Fox. He was aware that he had scored something of a coup when he brought Sinatra, Crosby and Cole Porter together. He said his greatest problem was working the filming into the individual schedules of his eminent cast. Grace Kelly was already at his disposal because of her existing contract with M-G-M which paid her $1,000 a week plus bonuses. As it happens, **High Society** was to be her last film due to her marriage to Prince Rainier of Monaco one month after shooting ceased. Her Metro contract through to 1960 would not be fulfilled but the studio had her penultimate film in the can for release prior to **High Society.** That was **The Swan**, a disappointing adaptation of a Ferenc Molnar play which succeeded at the box-office because of its co-incidental topicality - Kelly played an aristocratic beauty groomed for royalty. In **High Society,** Princess Grace made sure that the world knew she was betrothed to Prince Rainier by displaying her own engagement ring. This can be inspected most easily in the scenes where she crosses her fingers behind her head after promising to behave with the reporters played by Sinatra and Holm and again more prominently when she examines it herself on the sofa whilst sobering up.

Siegel paid well to secure the talent he wanted. Both Sinatra and Porter received a quarter of million dollars. Bing's remuneration was $200,000 plus a percentage of the gross, which brought him about the same again. The cost of the story was negligible because it was already owned by M-G-M where it had been produced in 1940 as **The Philadelphia Story.** Phillip Barry's original play was still easily recognisable in John Patrick's update. Because Siegel wanted **High Society** to be a showcase for Louis Armstrong's vocal and trumpet performances, he shifted the locale to Newport, Rhode Island, so that Satchmo played himself as a participant at the Newport annual jazz festival. The apparent affection Bing and Louis held for each other is well known, although this was perhaps more of a public display if we accept Armstrong's account of their relationship:

> "When we finished **High Society** Bing gave me a golden money clip which I used, inscribed 'To Louis from Bing'. And when he had a baby girl, I sent him a telegram, 'Now you have jazz'. He had a whole wall of my records, and every record he makes I buy. But we aren't social. In fact, I,ve never been invited to the home of a movie star - not even Bing's."

The pairing of Bing and Satchmo is more than justified by their duet of *Now You Has Jazz,* although it will never be the same again when you have registered Humphrey Lyttleton's observation. He said on an edition of the BBC Radio 2 programme **Jazz Score:**

> "I always feel nervous when I watch the film **High Society.** When Bing Crosby sings jazzy numbers he always flails his arms about. In the *Now You Has Jazz* number he comes within a whisker of knocking Louis Armstrong's trumpet down his throat."

Critically, the reviewers both here and in the States didn't go overboard at the time of the film's release. The review by Edward Goring in the December 14th, 1956 edition of the Daily Mail is not untypical of the films initial reception:

> "**High Society** is not the zippiest musical I have seen. Often it strikes a falling note and breaks awkwardly into tune. But it is certainly one of the zaniest due, incredibly, to the melting enchantment of that cool beauty Grace Kelly."

Time allows films to establish their own place in the popularity stakes. A re-appraisal decades later is far more likely to capture the true worth of a movie. Clive Hirschhorn in his book **The Hollywood Musical** probably sums it up for most viewers in the 1990s when he writes, *"A vintage M-G-M musical with a melodious score by Cole Porter. All performances under Charles Walters's direction sparkled."*

But the best monitor of a film's success is its performance at the box-office. It was the top ticket seller at U.K. cinemas in 1957. Against its cost of $1,500,000 it earned $5,800,000 in North America alone. It was placed 4th in Variety's list of moneymakers of 1956. And my guess is it is in the top three favourite films of just about everyone reading this magazine at the moment.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith's investigation of Bing's film career proceeds.

HOLDEN, WILLIAM (1918-1981) Actor, and a very good one when he was on form. Such an instance was in **The Country Girl** (1954) when he played Bernie Dodd, the Broadway director who fought for the Crosby character to be given a chance again and again whilst doing his best to win the affections of Grace Kelly, Bing's wife in the film. Holden had been marginally involved in two previous Crosby pictures. Like everyone else in the cast he had a small part in **Variety Girl** (1947) and in 1951 he was in the deadly dull short **You Can Change the World.** It took him less than a year to become a star. A Paramount talent scout spotted him when he was acting as a student. He played an extra in **Prison Farm** (1938) before the ink on his contract was dry, had one line in **Million Dollar Legs** shortly afterwards and made the big time as Joe Bonaparte, the boxer-violinist in **Golden Boy** in what should rightly be regarded as his first real screen role. His handsome features ensured he had major roles in quality pictures thereafter. There were a few clinkers but his golden decade was the 1950s when he scored in **Sunset Boulevard** (1950), **Born Yesterday** (1951), **Stalag 17** (1953) and **The Bridge on the River Kwai** (1957). Subsequent films tended to be action movies rather than acting assignments similar to **The Country Girl. Alvarez Kelly** (1966) and **The Wild Bunch** (1969) are typical. His last good film was **Network** (1976). By then drinking had thickened the once handsome features and although his last films were still mainstream he was no longer a box-office dependable.

HOLIDAY INN. Film. This 1942 Paramount picture proved to be Bing's most successful movie excursion to date. This was no doubt helped by the first teaming of Crosby with Fred Astaire, the craving by the English speaking world for escapist entertainment during the second world war and the strong Irving Berlin score - including the most popular record ever made, **White Christmas.** The film's plot begins on Christmas Eve and ends on New Year's Eve two years later. Bing quits his nightclub act with Fred Astaire and Virginia Dale to settle for a rural life in Connecticut. The tug of showbusiness sees him opening his place as a nightclub, but only on American public holidays. This provides the challenge to Irving Berlin to pen songs related to Independence Day, Easter, Lincoln's and Washington's birthday, Valentine's day, Thanksgiving, etc. The romantic sub plot finds Bing and Fred vying for the affections of Marjorie Reynolds, the nightclub's female entertainer. Bing wins her but Fred doesn't do so badly in settling for Virginia Dale. A few other facts about the film are:

- Both Mary Martin and Rita Hayworth were potential leading ladies before Marjorie Reynolds was cast
- The singing voice of Marjorie Reynolds was provided by Martha Mears
- The idea for the musical was hatched by Berlin and producer Moss Hart who conceived it as a Broadway revue
- Berlin's song *It's a Great Country* was intended for the film but was not used
- The 1942 Oscar for best song went to Irving Berlin for *White Christmas*

It was the first Crosby picture to register in the U.K. box-office top ten league table, where it took 5th placing in 1942.

HOLLANDER, FREDERICK. (1896-1976). London born composer (to German parents) who didn't have too much luck in placing his songs in Crosby musicals. The catchy duet *The House that Jack Built for Jill* was deleted from the release print of **Rhythm on the Range** (1936) and *Memories* was written for the same film but was not used. *Am I Awake and Hopelessly in Love* were written for the remake of **Anything Goes** (1956) but not used. The solitary composition that made it to a Bing picture was a good one, though. That was *My Heart and I,* featured in the first version of **Anything Goes** (1936). It followed Hollander's first success when he wrote *Falling in Love Again* in his pre-Hollywood days for Marlene Dietrich to sing in **The Blue Angel** (1930). A couple of subsequent compositions were made famous by Crosby duettists. Dorothy Lamour popularised *Moonlight and Shadows* and Connie Boswell had a hit with *Whispers in the Dark.* After a twenty year stint in Hollywood, Hollander returned to Germany in 1956.

HOLLOWAY, STERLING (1905-1991) Character actor. He appeared in three Crosby films: **Going Hollywood** (1933), **Doctor Rhythm** (1938) and **Star Spangled Rhythm** (1942), but it is the 1938 movie for which he is best remembered by Crosby watchers. He played Luke, the milk roundsman, who joins Bing and another high school colleague to break into Central Park Zoo in the opening scenes of the film. They then deliver a high spirited rendition of their school song *Public School 43.* Holloway was a screen regular playing delivery boys/country bumpkins/soda jerks in over one hundred films during the studio production line decades of the thirties and forties. He started without making use of his voice in the silent era and ended using just his voice only in Disney cartoons such **The Aristocats** (1970).

HOLLYWOOD DAFFY. 1946 cartoon. This Warner Bros. release was directed by cartoon regular Friz Freleng. It begins with Daffy Duck walking onto the Warner Brothers lot and attempting to pass the studio guard by disguising himself as various screen personalities. In the guise of Bing he puts a pipe into his mouth and croons *When My Dreamboat Comes Home.* Sadly, his ruse does not fool the guard, which is unfortunate because Mel Blanc does a very passable impression of the Crosby voice.

HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE. Series of short films. These were typical of support features of the early 1930s. Most of the major studios had similar series and used them to promote their contract players. Louis Lewyn produced two such series for Paramount in 1932 and 1933, with running times of around ten minutes each. They appeared on a monthly basis. The films portrayed movie stars off duty in what were supposed to be taken for candid shots but which were usually well orchestrated publicity pieces used to create interest in the studio contractees. Bing was in the February 1932 edition and then in the January, April and July editions of the following year. The Crosby footage is as follows:

- Feb 32 Dialogue with George Burns and Gracie Allen followed by the Bing singing *Auf Wiedersehen, My Dear*
- Jan 33 Dialogue between Bing and Mary Pickford following a sequence where Miss Pickford is seen listening to Bing singing *Down the Old Ox Road* on the car radio

- Apr 33 Bing, Jack Oakie and Skeets Gallagher sing *Boo-boo-boo*. Bing sings *Buckin the Wind*.
- Jul 33 Dialogue between Bing, John Barrymore and Harry Langdon

Bing and Mary Pickford on parade

HOLLYWOOD STEPS OUT

Cartoon. Made in the 1930s, this colour cartoon depicts Bing together with Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, the Three Stooges and other screen celebrities of the decade. The voice impersonations were impressive. The Crosby segment of the cartoon was utilised in the 1975 documentary feature **Brother Can You Spare a Dime?**

HOLLYWOOD VICTORY CARAVAN

Documentary short. Made at the end of the second world war for the U.S. War Activities Committee it was shown in American cinemas in 1945 to encourage citizens to buy war bonds. Paramount produced and distributed the film and it featured several of their contract players of the time. Bob Hope, Betty Hutton, Alan Ladd, Robert Benchley, Barbara Stanwyck and William Demarest appeared alongside Bing. The Crosby contribution was *We've got Another Bond to Buy,* which no doubt pleased the U.S. Treasury Department.

HOLM, CELESTE

(1919-) Actress. She had a major part in **High Society** as Frank Sinatra's sidekick Liz Imbrie. In the film, both were on the payroll of Spy magazine, with Holm playing the part of the photographer assigned to cover the wedding of Tracy Lord (Grace Kelly). It was her tenth year in films, having signed a contract with Twentieth Century-Fox in 1946 following a successful run on Broadway in the role of Ado Annie in *Oklahoma*. She won an Oscar for her performance in a supporting role in her third film, **Gentleman's Agreement**. Two more Oscar nominations followed for **Come to the Stable** (1949) and **All About Eve** (1950). **High Society** found her at her popularity peak and she appeared in only four more films before her farewell to Hollywood appearance in **The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover** in 1978.

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD

1976 compilation film narrated by Mickey Rooney. It was a tribute to the films and stars of Hollywood in the 1930s and used film clips from that decade. Bing was seen singing *Down the Old Ox Road* from an edition of **Hollywood on Parade** mentioned above. A dialogue sequence from the Sennett short **Sing, Bing, Sing** was also included.

HOOT MON

Song sung in **Road to Bali** by Crosby and Hope. The two are dressed in kilts and play the bagpipes as they entertain an audience which includes Dorothy Lamour as Princess Lalah. The song is given a brief reprise later in a sequence where dancing girls are produced from a wicker snake basket. If you viewed the film on its first U.K. television outing on Christmas Day, 1965 you would have missed the reprise version because the BBC edited the sequence in view of the scantily clad females. Like all of the songs specially composed for the film, the words and music were by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen respectively.

HOPE, BOB

(1903-) Actor/comedian associated with Bing on film from 1940 onwards. The list of movies in which they both appeared spans 32 years. For the record the films are:

- **Road to Singapore** (1940) as Ace Lannigan
- **Road to Zanzibar** (1941) as Hubert Fearless Frazier
- **My Favourite Blonde** (1942) as Larry Haines. Bing made a gag appearance
- **Road to Morocco** (1942) as Orville Turkey Jackson
- **Star Spangled Rhythm** (1942) as a master of ceremonies
- **The Princess and the Pirate** (1944) as Sylvester the Great. Bing made a gag appearance
- **All Star Bond Rally** (1945) Short. As himself
- **Hollywood Victory Caravan** (1945) Short. As himself
- **Road to Utopia** (1946) as Chester Hootan
- **Variety Girl** (1947) as himself
- **My Favourite Brunette** (1947) as Ronnie Jackson. Bing made a gag appearance
- **Road to Rio** (1948) as Hot Lips Barton
- **You Can Change the World** (1951) Short. As himself
- **The Greatest Show on Earth** (1952) Brief appearances by Crosby and Hope as themselves
- **Son of Paleface** (1952) as Junior Potter. Bing made a gag appearance
- **Road to Bali** (1952) as Harold Gridley
- **Scared Stiff** (1952) as himself in gag appearance with Bing
- **Faith Hope and Hogan** (1953) Short. As himself
- **Showdown at Ulcer Gulch** (1958) Short. As himself
- **Alias Jesse James** (1959) as Milford Farnsworth. Bing made a gag appearance
- **The Road to Hong Kong** (1962) as Chester Babcock
- **Cancel My Reservation** (1972) as Dan Bartlett. Bing made a gag appearance

Their professional relationship extended beyond cinema films. They regularly appeared on each others radio shows and during world war two gave their services to entertain the troops or sell war bonds. They were teamed together on ten recordings beginning with the twinning of *Road to Morocco* with *Put it There, Pal* in 1944. Television saw them frequently appearing together on the same show, sometimes unexpectedly as "surprise" guests. They were both good golfers and spent time together on various courses both in the States and this country. When Hope made an eightieth birthday tour of British venues he devoted a large section of his act to recalling their friendship. Ten years earlier it was highly likely that Bing would have strolled on from the wings part way through Hope's performance. Their showbusiness personas depicted them as constantly feuding and although this was a sham perpetuated by their gag writers, quite often it was the unrehearsed ad lib which brought the biggest laughs from their audiences.

Leslie Towns Hope was born in Eltham in 1903. His parents went to the U.S. when Bob was four and the family settled in Cleveland. Hope gagged that it was his idea to leave England when he realised that he would never be crowned King. He grew up knowing that he was born to entertain. At ten he won a Charlie Chaplin-imitation contest. According to his studio biography he was a newsboy, soda jerk and boxer before he

made his living touring in an act of "song, patter and eccentric dancing". By then vaudeville was coming to an end and he wisely switched to the musical theatre, securing a part in the Broadway hit **Roberta** in 1933. Whilst in New York he had his first opportunity to try out for the movies and he appeared in eight comedy shorts. However it was his success on radio which brought him to the attention of Hollywood, hence his feature film debut in **The Big Broadcast of 1938.** That film also introduced him to his theme song, *Thanks for the Memory*. He began to develop the cowardly character he portrayed so well in **The Cat and the Canary** in 1939 and it surfaced in box-office hits for several years thereafter in films such as **The Ghostbreakers** (1940), **Caught in the Draft** (1941), **Monsieur Beaucaire** (1946) and **My Favourite Spy** (1951). By then there was recognition that he could take on more serious comedy roles. **The Seven Little Foys** (1955) was a good example. That was followed by **Beau James** (1957) and **The Facts of Life** (1960). Unfortunately Hope was unable to sustain quality adult comedy for the rest of his big screen career. I was a faithful fan for a few of his 1960s comedies - **I'll Take Sweden** (1965), **Boy Did I Get a Wrong Number** (1966) and **Eight on the Lam** (1967) but the standard became increasingly poor. Either Hope's ability to select good material or his failure to keep up to date with changing times let him down. It wasn't that he couldn't find good writers. When he performed in this country, topical gags were written for him by the likes of Bob Monkhouse, Dennis Goodwin and Dick Vosborough amongst others and the laughs generated were well earned. Either to gain more control or increase his income he billed himself executive producer for his final film, **Cancel My Reservation** (1972). It was no funnier than his films of the previous decade. Of course, Hope's name could add marquee value to films even then. His regular emcee duties at the annual presentation of the Academy Awards assured him a world-wide audience. He still toured the world to entertain American troops stationed abroad and his Stateside television shows gathered respectable ratings. But somehow you got the feeling he was coasting along on his reputation. In recent years eye problems have reduced his public appearances although his interest in golf has not diminished in the least. He is regularly called the richest entertainer who ever lived, a fact he never fails to deny. Bob Hope will go down in history as the middle twentieth century's major contribution to American entertainment in its broadest sense.

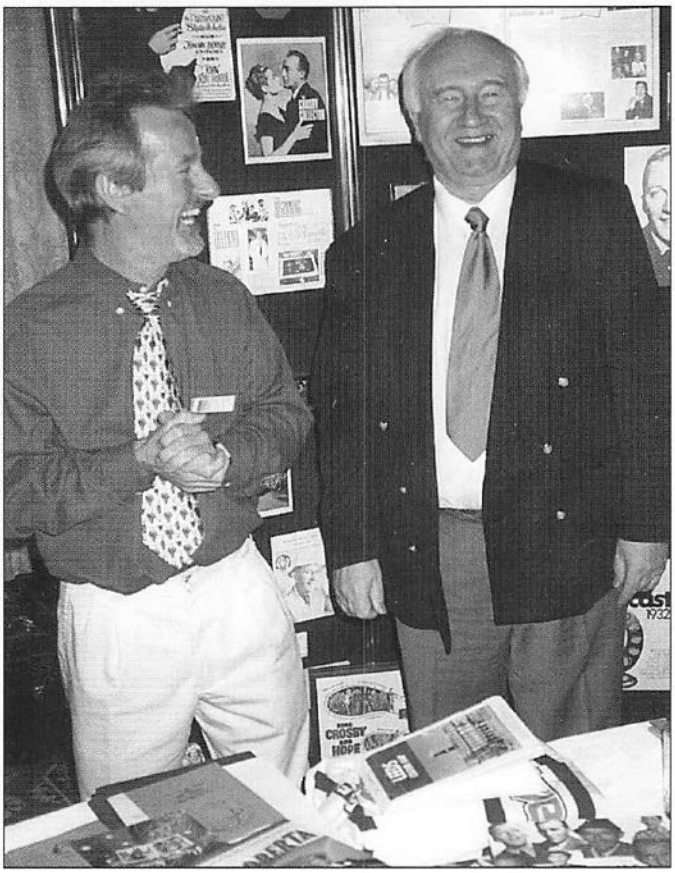
LEEDS '97

Ron Bosley was there and sends his report.

Roundhay Park, as usual, the venue for the 32nd annual meeting and dinner of the ICC, and blessed, once again, with a sunny afternoon.

Promptly, at 3 p.m., secretary Michael set things in motion by asking all present to stand in silent tribute to members who had passed away during the past twelve months. This was followed by a general address of welcome to the 73 present, and then Michael played a couple of tape messages originally recorded by Bing; one in 1975 and the other taped just a few days prior to his death. Greetings were read out from Wig Wiggins and wife Laura, David Currington and Ralph Harding, both in Australia. Ralph certainly gets around!

Words of welcome were then expressed to new members present, Ole Meistrup and Gun Damo from Denmark, Mr. and Mrs. Vic Early from London, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Ward from Oldham, Raymond Hull from Dewsbury, Derek Perkins from Dublin, Ronnie Wilkinson from Norwich and Jacqueline Lord from Edinburgh. Members were pleased to see Joan Griffiths, widow of Eric, making her first visit, in company with Wally Oldfield, and Leeds veteran, Tom Matthews had brought his son for the first time.

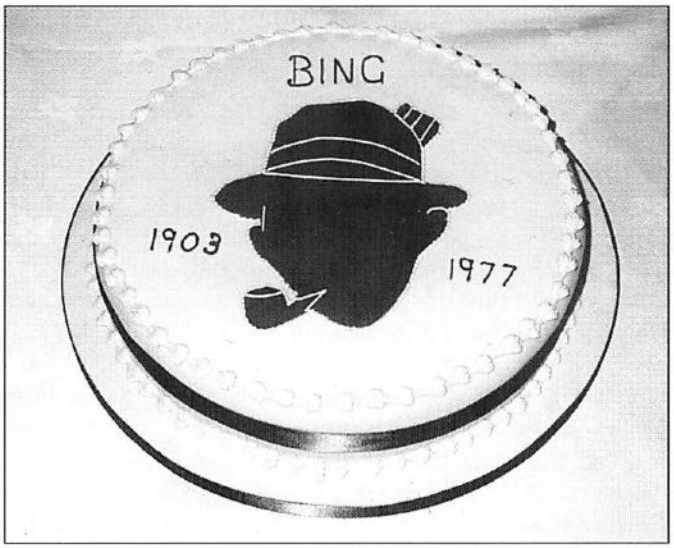


Ken Barnes and Michael share a joke

Michael's next pleasant task was to make a presentation to Editor Malcolm. This was in the form of a special leather bound copy of 'Bing - a Diary of a Lifetime' in appreciation of the many hours of dedicated research entailed in compiling the book. Malcolm then took the opportunity to give everyone present an insight into the problems and costs involved in producing each issue of BING. The meeting agreed that the club should stay with its present arrangements with an understanding that magazines will sometimes be delayed. Malcolm then played excerpts from a new CD which contained recordings of the 1956 and 1957 meetings of the British Crosby Society. It was eerie to listen to a young Ralph Harding from 1956 describing his large record collection and fascinating to hear early messages from Bing to the club.

Various items of business, which Malcolm has already described in his Editorial, were discussed before another presentation was made, this time to Netherlands member Etty Gits for her efforts as European representative for the ICC. Jim Reilly gave news of the imminent release of the 'Memories' CD and followed this with the first part of his annual video compilation, before making way for Michael to introduce Ken Barnes. Ken (like George O'Reilly, and

also present) is a gifted storyteller and his experiences whilst working with Bing and Fred Astaire and interspersed with extracts from EMI's new 3-CD release, made for compelling listening.



The beautiful cake donated by Mavis Heason

After an excellent dinner provided by the Mansion House, Ken resumed his talk and treated his audience to a selection of film clips taken from his own collection of Laserdiscs. The quality of sound and picture certainly enhanced the enjoyment of 'Starlight at the Cocoanut Grove' through to excerpts from 'High Society'. Dare I say what really impressed your scribe was the final clip, the 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' sequence from Glenn Miller's 'Sun Valley Serenade', an absolute humdinger! Brilliant!

Regrettably, because of the clock, Arnold Pope's ever popular quiz had to be shortened, and the second part of Jim Reilly's presentation had to be cancelled. Earlier in the proceedings, and for a small charge, members were invited to guess the weight of a large and splendid cake, beautifully decorated with the 'Bing' motif and donated and brought by Mavis Heason. This was won and carried off in triumph by Les Moore and his charming wife.

Vera and I plus our guest Gwen Harvey left at 11 p.m. after a very full and pleasant nine hours had flown by, and enjoyed, I venture to say, by everyone present, slightly marred perhaps, by a few rather pointless and ill-informed criticisms made by one member and directed at the club in general and Ken Barnes in particular.

Ron Bosley

(Thanks, Ron for your comprehensive review of a very nice day. The presentation from Ken Barnes was excellent and kept most members spellbound. However, as Ron has described, one relatively new member seemed to take issue with most of Ken's comments leading to some embarrassing exchanges. This man had been loudly challenging most facets of the day starting with some heated exchanges before the meeting involving the records on sale. We are all entitled to our opinions and a free exchange of views is always welcomed in the ICC provided that they are expressed in a tactful and sensitive manner. Unfortunately though, the loud interruptions had become a nuisance before Ken Barnes arrived, leading to several members complaining to Michael Crampton and I. Ken Barnes had come to the meeting at his own expense and willingly shared many of his experiences with Bing and it was not acceptable to submit him to such rude behaviour. We trust that there will not be a reoccurrence next year.

Ron Bosley mentioned the extracts from the records of the 1956 and 1957 club meetings and I asked Stan White to give us some background information about those far off days.)

BRITISH CROSBY SOCIETY CLUB MEETINGS: May 1956 and September 1957

Bing's first ever tape recorded message to the BCS

Bill Taylor, who was appointed 'discologist' to the British Crosby Society early in 1956, offered, together with Mrs Taylor, to host a meeting of the British Crosby Society at his home in Torrington Square, Holborn on May 26th 1956.

Ted Laker and I were publicity officers for the Society appointed by the Co-President Frank Murphy. It was a busy time for us all because at that time we were trying to boost the image of the Society, mainly to bring in new members and to create extra interest for existing members. The foundations of the Society were laid in March 1950 with people such as Dot Hardiman, Jean Rainey, Geoff Milne, Ralph Harding, Leslie Gaylor, Ted Laker and others.

I decided to write to Bing and ask if he could send along a recorded message which could be played over at the May meeting. This seemed to be a good idea as far as Bing was concerned and he recorded the message on an Ampex Studio Recorder at CBS when he was doing some work with Buddy Cole. Producer Murdo McKenzie posted the tape to me together with his own written greeting.

Dot Hardiman, who was Co-President with Frank, could not attend the 1956 meeting and this of course also applied to other members for whatever reason. Frank, Ted and I came up with the idea of making a recording at the meeting which would be based on interviews and contributions from members. To do this, we had to make use of an early domestic reel to reel tape recorder which Bill Taylor owned and on the whole the recording was a success. Walt Liner conducted the interviews. The results, along with Bing's message, were cut on to a 10" acetate LP by Derek Marsh of Deroy Sound Services in Ormskirk. I don't know how many of this 'Club Disc'

were sold but it certainly created a lot of interest. So when Bill Taylor hosted another meeting on September 8 1957, another recording was made, parts of which now seem to be less formal than the 1956 recording, such as a sing-song.

Bill Taylor had purchased a different tape recorder by 1957 and the 7.5 ips tape speed did vary slightly from that of his previous recorder. That, along with yet another speed variation on the equipment used for mastering prior to cutting the discs, does mean that there was a variation of sound on different parts of these recordings. Hopefully this does not distract from the listening value which involves contributions from some present ICC members from 41 years ago. It is entertaining on the one hand and a historical reminder of the early days of the BCS/ICC on the other. I had almost forgotten these recordings until Malcolm Macfarlane reminded me of them in the past summer. He had heard an item or two from them when visiting Peter Haizelden and he thought that it would be nice to play some selected extracts at the Leeds meeting.

Many years have passed since I last played the two acetate LPs and when I located them, I found that some acetate fungus had attacked some of the grooves. However this was removed reasonably well and the two LPs despatched to Barry Whittingham so that he could make a master from them for use on CD and cassette. After all of these years, it is possible that ICC members would like to hear these historic recordings and Barry has agreed to make a cassette available at £4.50 inc. P&P - or a CD for £7. The playing time is over 50 minutes.

My reaction upon hearing these recordings from Barry's CD is that it brings it all back to life, making it difficult to accept that whatever age those taking part were then, 41 years must now be added, for instance I was 24. Ralph Harding was well into his 30s - so by now he has well outlived Bing's years on this earth.

Voices heard on the recordings include:
Bill Taylor, Ron Davies, Stan White, Walt Liner, Ted Laker, Sheila Willett, Eddie McDermott, Eric Griffiths, Cab Smith, Joe and Anne Crosby, Jean Gosling, Dot Hardiman, Frank Murphy, Percy Keepin and Jean Rainey. Plus songs by Eddie McDermott, Joe Crosby and Cab Smith together with some sing-along activity involving all. Plus the first ever taped message to the club from Bing for the 1956 meeting.

One of the most interesting interviews conducted by Walt Liner was with Ralph Harding in 1956, when Ralph recalled the early days of the Crosby movement which links directly to the present ICC. Others present included Derek Parkes. The photograph of the 1956 event is reproduced here but it is difficult to identify all of those pictured at this distance in time, not that I ever knew them all personally anyway.

If you want a CD or cassette, contact Barry Whittingham, 25C Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham, NG6 8RZ (phone 0115 927 0698). Barry will make a donation to the ICC for each item sold.

Stan White

The 1956 meeting. Stan White is first on the left of the back row of four people. Bill Taylor is the man in glasses holding the child.

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1. That's What Life Is All About
2. We've Only Just Begun
3. The Best Things In Life Are Free
4. Great Day
5. Children
6. The More I See You
7. I Got Rhythm
8. No Time At All
9. A Little Love And Understanding
10. The Good Old Times
11. Cabaret
12. Send In The Clowns
13. Change Partners
14. Looking At You
15. Yours Sincerely
16. How Are Things In Glocca Morra?
17. The Woman On Your Arm
18. Bon Vivant
19. When A Child I s Born
20. That's What Life Is All About-Reprise

Disc 2

1. The Pleasure Of Your Company
2. Good Companions/And Points Beyond
3. The Pleasure Of Your Company
4. Introduction To The Way We Were
5. The Way We Were
6. Cuando Caliente El Sol
7. Sing
8. You've Got A Friend
9. My Cup Runneth Over
10. A Song For You
11. Top Billing
12. Roxie
13. Pick Yourself Up
14. Sing
15. Mr. Keyboard Man
16. How Lucky Can You Get
17. Spring, Spring, Spring
18. I've Got A Shooting Box In Scotland
19. In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening
20. A Couple Of Song And Dance Men
21. Top-Billing Reprise
22. "Session Sound Bites"
24. Paris Holiday
25. Nothing In Common

Disc 3

1. Come Share The Wine
2. I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance
3. Beautiful Memories
4. Hello Dolly
5. My Heart Stood Still
6. My Resistance Is Low
7. With A Song In My Heart
8. Breezin' Along With The Breeze
9. Razzle Dazzle
10. Have A Nice Day
11. Heat Wave
12. Something To Remember You By
13. I'll Never Fall In Love Again
14. What I Did For Love
15. Deja Vu (As Tho' You Never Went Away)
16. Some Sunny Day
17. Thou Swell
18. At My Time Of Life
19. The Only Way To Go

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LETTER FROM LESLIE

I would like to thank everyone concerned for their involvement in the production of the Summer issue of BING. What fine reading it certainly made.

You may be interested to learn how the recently released "Memories" compact disc came into being. I wrote to Steve Tallamy of MCA (now Universal Music) to suggest that they produce a Bing compact disc to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Bing's passing. Steve was the man responsible for the last MCA CD which I was also involved with - 'The Best Of Bing Crosby' (double album). I then had a telephone call from Alan Hodgson who told me that Steve Tallamy had handed him my letter for him to action. As he said that he didn't know too much about Bing, he asked me if I would personally select about 25 titles for a CD that they intended to produce in time to commemorate Bing's passing as I had suggested.

My next move was to make a list of 25 titles and then I asked fellow members Ernest Sutkowski, Stan White and Jim Reilly to do the same. I asked that all the lists be sent to Jim as I had previously asked him if he would mind being responsible for choosing the titles that would appear on the CD. I gave him the responsibility to liaise direct with Alan Hodgson at MCA to produce a suitable list combining some selections from each of our lists. With more song titles than he could have possibly used, Jim could have made any number of combinations for the CD. MCA obviously liked Jim's choice and we are now lucky enough to have "Memories" released.

I was very impressed with the mastering of the tracks on the CD which was expertly carried out by Peter J Reynolds and Ken Barnes. They did a wonderful job, particularly with my 78s that were supplied as no suitable MCA masters were available. These were used for the following tracks: The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair, Little Lady Make Believe, Whistling In The Wildwood, Who Gave You The Roses, I Didn't Slip I Wasn't Pushed I Fell and When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby. The sound quality of all the songs on the album is as good as I've ever heard and Bing is in great voice throughout. It's a pity that we can't have more CDs as good. I was pleased that Ken had been involved with the mastering, particularly as he had told me he would have liked to have re-mastered some of the poorer tracks on 'The Best Of Bing Crosby' album. MCA certainly came up with a fine booklet with really informative notes and I hope that it will get a good public response to ensure that a further release or two may be forthcoming. Jim, Ken and MCA have done a fine job between them.

It was also nice to see the release of the Ken Barnes albums "The 50th Anniversary Concert At The London Palladium" and "The Complete United Artists Sessions", both of which were re-mastered by Peter Reynolds and Ken Barnes. Although we have had all the titles on record for many years it is good to now have them on CD.

I must also tell you how much I like the new book "Bing - A Diary Of A Lifetime" by Malcolm Macfarlane. This is truly a work of art with marvellous photographs used throughout. Malcolm must have spent hour upon hour carrying out his research which I think is all worth while with the magnificent final result. Whoever designed the layout is also to be congratulated.

In closing I would like to pass on my best wishes to all members and their families for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Leslie Gaylor

(Editor: Thanks, Les and I know that such items embarrass you but I must mention the very nice article about you and your involvement with Bing in the 'Yours' magazine Autumn Special edition. Allan Warburton put together a nice two page article including four photographs and the photo of Leslie shown here came from it. All good publicity for the 'cause'.)

Leslie in his Bing room

BING CROSBY - A DIARY OF A LIFETIME

We have had a superb response from many of you about our new publication. It was delayed slightly but I hope that the wait was worthwhile. Extracts from some of the letters received are shown below:

"I have now had a chance to look more closely into the 'Diary'. It is a very impressive piece of work and I know, only too well, how much time and effort you must have spent in compiling it. The publication, printing and

photographs match its excellence and make it a most worthy and worthwhile addition to the Crosby canon. Congratulations on a job well done." **(Fred Reynolds)**

"'Bing - a Diary of a Lifetime' is an exceptional publication which, surely would have received Bing's highest praise for design and printing. Malcolm Macfarlane's compilation is an interesting, readable, concise history of this century's greatest entertainer. Thus far the reports received by me are that it is excellent, impressive and that all parties involved should be commended and thanked. I think it deserves a special award and if I were in a position to present a silver cup, it certainly would be made of sterling." **(Ernest H. Sutkowski)**

"I cannot find the proper words to say how pleased I am at the exquisite photographs, printing and in fact the complete effort that Malcolm Macfarlane and his team have put into this book for the Bing appreciators. I have many photographs of Bing in books etc., one being a Rhythm Boys silhouette and now I see from the diary (page 13) that all is revealed. This is the first time I've seen the picture." **(Raymond McCormack)**

"Many thanks for the Diary, so much of interest and many thanks to Malcolm and yourself for publishing such an excellent book. How the past members would have been so proud that the ICC could achieve such a standard that it has reached today." **(Charlie Tupper)**

"Please convey my congratulations to everyone concerned in the production of this beautiful book! It's really excellent - so informative and with lots of first-class photos too!" **(Ken Brown)**

"I was very excited to get your book this week. Wonderful research. Great pictures. Really too much to assimilate quickly. I would love to be the screenwriter who used a portion of your research as a starting point." **(Ron Hall, Festival Films)**

"I must let you know how both grateful and overwhelmed I am by your 'Diary of a Lifetime' book. What a fantastic reference this is - unbelievable! It must've taken an incredible amount of research (but I'll bet it was a labour of love). My hats off to you for putting together something that every person who loves Bing Crosby should not be without." **(Greg Van Beek)**

"I thought it was a marvellous diary. I'm sure it would sell well commercially, if that could be organised." **(Tony Peverett)**

"The Diary exceeds any thoughts I had of it. Congratulations on a superb publication." **(John Barnett)**

"What a great book 'A Diary of a Lifetime' is. I was intrigued to see that Bing was at Doncaster on September 7th, 8th and 9th, in 1966, as I had a phone call about this very episode from a Jack Calvert only last year. It appears that Jack was a horse trainer in those days and met Bing, who was there with Paddy Prendergast (an Irish trainer) on September 8th. Jack and Ada, his wife, were in the Owners' and Trainers' bar when Bing arrived. Ada, being a great Bing fan asked him to sign her race card, which he duly did - 'To Ada, Best Wishes, Bing Crosby'. Looking at the race card for 'The Cleveland Handicap' on September 8th, Bing saw a horse called 'Crosby Don', owned by Don Roper (?) and said he would 'have a few bob on' because of its name. It went on to win! Don Roper lived in Crosby Lane in Northallerton and all his horses were called Crosby — after the road, not because of Bing." **(Michael Winspear)**

"What a 'bril' production - congratulations, excellent. You wanted to know about queries - well I have one already and I have only had a quick browse. ENTRY FOR JULY 1st, 1943. I have a recording of this on 'Shhh - Bing Vol. 4' giving this date - but I have always wondered about the date of recording as to my mind Bing's voice is that of 1937 - the vibrato is that of the period, not of 1943." **(Alan Chadwick)**

Yes, Alan I agree that Bing's voice sounds younger than his 1943 version. I have listened to the track and undoubtedly it is from 1937. I would guess that it was a rehearsal recording made before the film soundtrack for 'Double or Nothing' was prepared. So did Decca use this as an experiment or did the press coverage I saw relate to other tracks which had come from a wire recording at Army camps? Any thoughts from members would be appreciated and in the meantime I have amended my computer version of the diary.

I am particularly anxious to have feedback from members about gaps in the diary and any other errors they may have spotted. One error is the entry shown on July 8, 1942 for the Gershwin Memorial Concert. I had originally entered this as taking place on July 4, 1942 as it was broadcast on that date. Mark Scrimger challenged me on this as he has a programme of the event clearly showing a date of June 18, 1942. Bing was in his Kraft Music Hall show that day and I wondered whether he could have done both shows. Did the Gershwin concert have to be re-arranged to July 4 because of the clash after the programmes had been printed? I ran out of time to research the item further so I decided to go with Mark's date of June 18 and I made a late amendment to the proof for the printer. Whilst the printer did amend the date, he amended it incorrectly to July 8 which was completely wrong. What is needed is for someone who has access to the Los Angeles newspapers of 1942 to look up the two dates to see what happened. Many libraries maintain copies of newspapers in microfilm form and there is scope for many of our members in the USA to look at dates in the diary when Bing was in their locality and to examine the local newspaper records to gain a clearer picture of what happened. In particular, it would be helpful if we could gain a fuller idea of Bing's War Bond sales activities in World War Two when he toured the USA. I shall provide updates in BING as fresh data is received.

Another error is the entry for April 27, 1948. The year should be 1949 and in fact the award is mentioned on Bing's Philco show which was broadcast on May 4 that year.

An entry which can be expanded nicely is set out by Ron Field in his letter to me.
"Compulsive reading, that is all I can say of 'The Diary'. What a mighty effort. Congratulations!
...I have a newspaper cutting as follows:
Vancouver June 1st., 1951
The management of the Hotel Vancouver refused Bing Crosby a room because they thought he was a tramp. Crosby, on a fishing trip in Canada, sauntered into the lobby of the hotel on Monday (28th. May) after an all day drive from Idaho and was unshaven, wearing a leather jacket, dungarees and boots. The clerk icily told Bing that the hotel was booked out and for a long time. Bing was getting back into his car when a bellboy recognised him."

Thanks, Ron. Just the kind of information I want. Further contributions from members like this would be welcomed.

If you haven't got your copy of the diary, don't delay, they are going quickly and you may kick yourself in the years to come if you don't have one.

Malcolm Macfarlane

The Bing Crosby Internet Museum

by Steven Lewis (lewis@kcmetro.cc.mo.us)

The Bing Crosby Internet Museum was born June 13, 1996, on the server of the Metropolitan Community Colleges in Kansas City, Missouri, where I am employed as a biology instructor. The following week *The Scout Report* from the University of Wisconsin sent out this notice to the Internet community:

The Bing Crosby home page, organised around a list of 62 questions about Bing Crosby, allows you to test your knowledge of this legendary crooner. Each question links to detailed information about Crosby, his career, and his music. Through the end of June, users can download and play a thirty-second excerpt from Crosby's 1932 recording of 'Please' which Paul; McCartney credited with inspiring the Beatles' 'Please Please Me'. In addition, there is substantial coverage of Crosby's competition with Frank Sinatra ('The swooner vs. The Crooner'). Links to other Crosby sites, and to those of his musical colleagues, round out this tribute to Bing. (The Scout Report, June 21, 1996)

Since then, the Crosby Internet Museum has grown to more than 250 pages and 14 megabytes of information. It appears to be the largest site on the Internet devoted to one entertainer. The site includes a page of current events and announcements; upcoming Crosby appearances on TV; a description of the contents of Crosby CDs; a detailed radio log; a 1700-song discography; dozens of quotations about Bing and by Bing; excerpts from books about Bing; extensive biographies of significant people in Bing's life, such as Jack Kapp, Irving Berlin and John Scott Trotter; and more than a hundred images and many sound files.
One of the more popular features of the site is its bulletin board that is reserved for people who want to share their Crosby memories and memorabilia with the online community. In the first year of the bulletin board more than 600 messages were posted.

The Crosby Museum has averaged about a thousand visitors a month since August of 1996. In December of '96 more than 1,400 visitors downloaded the 'White Christmas' audio file from Bing's 1955 CBS broadcast. Each month a different audio file is featured. These have included 'I've Got the Girl', 'Teamwork', 'Straight Down the Middle', and 'Once in a While'. Excerpts from Bing's radio shows have also been posted, including Bing's first network radio broadcast (1931) and the Philco show on which he introduced to the world the first 33rpm record player (1948).

The Crosby Museum also links you to other sites on the Internet devoted to Bing as well as other celebrities that might be of interest to Crosby fans. Unlike most of these sites, however, the Crosby Museum attempts to go beyond mere star-worshipping to critically evaluate Bing's career, his impact and his personality. No attempt is made to hide or sugar-coat controversial aspects of Bing's career or character. These issues are dealt with critically, not superficially or sensationally. The Museum is a non-commercial educational site. No paid advertising is accepted, and I receive no compensation for the hundreds of hours I have worked on the site, other than an occasional compliment from a satisfied visitor. My development and maintenance of the site reflects my respect for and interest in Bing and the popular culture of his era. Anyone who spends much time browsing the Museum will, no doubt, go away with a deeper appreciation of American culture during the first half of the 20th century and Bing's significance to it.

http://www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/pennvalley/biology/lewis/crosby/bing.htm

(Editor: Well done, Steven. You are performing a remarkable service for the Crosby world. Keep up the good work! Since writing his article, Steven has prepared a special page on his site to commemorate the 20th. anniversary of Bing's death which included an audio soundbite of 'When I Leave the World Behind' plus extracts from books by various celebrities about Bing and his death.)

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Tim Morgereth, 5 Beach Drive, Inverness, Baltimore, Maryland 21222-4925, USA

....I was a bit disappointed that once more, no mention was made at all about my forthcoming Bing series of books, only my first book. Would you please ensure mention is made next time? I feel it's an unfair advantage for the officers to promote extensively their own work, while absent-mindedly neglecting the 'competition'. Might I remind you that Reg Bristo never once mentioned my first book. I feel confident you'll see all dues payers receive equal representation.

I'm sure Lionel and Malcolm will produce a superb radio book. In all modesty, but realistically, I feel my book will be far more detailed, comprehensive and saleable. May the best book grace our shelves. I'm already under contract and have expanded my US and Commonwealth copyrights, which are no longer shared with McFarland & Co, but solely my own. Volume 1 will be the most detailed and comprehensive discography ever assembled. Volume II, equal in scope and expanse will be devoted to radio. Volume III, films and television. Volume IV collectibles, Volume V musically annotated alternate takes for record and radio. More Volumes planned!

In the spirit of Jelly Roll Morton's famous response to Ripley, I will be going after the late Bob Roberts' Guinness claim next year on my 30th. anniversary as a collector. Who better knowledgeable to produce books concerning records and radio?....

....As Bing did with his St. Columban Fathers 'Silent Night', I hope to mirror his sense of charity. While the ICC books add to your coffers, all my future proceeds are going to underprivileged children in the Dominican Republic directly. Besides the books, educational materials, clothes, toys and treats these children have been increasingly getting through my and my fiancee's efforts, I have grander goals. The sales of my forthcoming radio work hopefully will pay for several corrective surgeries for an eight year old crippled girl. This past year I was able to get an artificial leg for a poor girl shark attack victim 13 years old. My motives and protectiveness are pure and sincere. Crosby is a means to provide in the end. I've combined all my greatest passions and at considerable expense. So, in short, while you promote your own book, for the sake of these children, please promote my efforts and decades of research too. Once my books hit the press, all the collector cats will be out of the bag.....I feel, if I may speak openly, a far more valuable ICC publishing effort to everyone will be the wonderful encyclopaedia! And the great diary project. I would be happy to give Lionel joint authority if the ICC won't hinder my efforts even though his assistance would be minimal to me. I recognise the years of hard work he's put in too. Why compete when we can all co-operate and really rock the Bing world? It won't mean money for us, but the children for many years to come will thank God for Bing Crosby and the researchers who helped our own and helped others at the same time. All I ask is some respect to my decades of work and costly acquisitions...

If I may comment a bit, one museum who would dearly love donations is the Ted Lewis Museum in Circleville, Ohio (managed by the City and Ted's trust). No hassles, fuss, paperwork, accountants etc. They would welcome records and memorabilia on anyone of the era and they bend over backwards to help anyone....

....I felt some sounding off to be healthy and to promote co-operation and clarification.

(Editor: Tim's letter was perhaps unfortunately phrased in places and it certainly touched a nerve with me. However in the interests of fair play, I have printed extracts (there were 8 pages in all) which capture the essence of his sentiments. My own personal views (not necessarily those of the Management team) are that Tim's charitable aims are laudable and are to be commended. The ICC however exists for the benefit of members and our duty as stewards of subscriptions and donations is to ensure that we produce the magazine and other publications in a cost effective manner and to offer our publications to the members at around cost price. We do not aim to make a profit and it follows that we are not in a position to make charitable donations without the sanction of our membership. Tim has asked us to stand aside and not proceed with our planned radio directory which Lionel Pairpoint has been working on for many years. Having seen what Lionel has produced so far, I can tell you that it is incredibly detailed and a wonderful record of Bing's radio career. In the circumstances, I could only tell Tim that we hope to proceed to publish Lionel's tome, hopefully next year, regardless of Tim's own plans. You will note that Tim also intends to publish a discography and I have already challenged him on the need for this. What with 'Bing - Just for the Record', Roger Osterholm's bio-discography, Tim's earlier book and more recently the Fred Reynolds series of books, surely the subject has been fairly fully covered. However, as soon as Tim tells us when the books are to be published, we will provide full details. Members comments would be welcomed.)

Michael Winspear, 121 Ashington Grove, Whitley, Coventry, CV3 4DD

I was delighted with the latest BING magazine. As usual, it was up to the highest standard. I must take issue, however, with Jim Newell of Southampton, and his remarks about CDs and the likelihood of disintegration of sound. With improved technology, CDs produced using modern techniques no longer have this problem. Originally, CDs were silvered and then lacquered. The lacquer was gas permeable, which allowed the silver to corrode. This led to the distortion mentioned above. Now, however, they are made of aluminium and the lacquer is not gas permeable. As long as the CDs are made to a high enough standard, then they should last up to a hundred years. If CDs are bought from firms which are not so reputable, then they may be substandard and in consequence will not last the test of time.
(Editor: See also 'Keeping Track' for further information on this subject.)

Michael Collins, Port Orange, Florida, USA

Saw the 1996 film 'Mother Night' yesterday at Cinematique in Daytona (a sort of film club). I could scarcely believe my ears when Bing's voice came on over the opening credits singing 'White Christmas'. I first recognised the opening bars of the introduction, but the entire song was included. Then the director's name came on the screen.

The central character, played by Nick Nolte, is a sort of William Joyce in reverse; he is a double agent. Yet, when he returns to America after the War, he is disowned by the very Government that employed him. Thus, the fact that he was really a double agent was never revealed. When he was later discovered to be living in New York, he is befriended and regarded as a hero by a weird Neo-Nazi group. At the same time, he is being sought by the Israelis for war crimes. He eventually ends up in an Israeli prison, occupying the cell directly under Adolf Eichmann. That is where the film begins; he is entering prison and Crosby is heard as he is led along to his cell. Takes a couple of minutes.

The Crosby connection is tenuous. His only legacy from wartime work seems to have been a large consignment of army surplus, to wit numerous copies of Bing singing 'White Christmas'. A snatch of this comes up during the film as he explains what happened. At the risk of giving the plot away, I have to mention that he commits suicide pre-empting virtually certain execution, at the very end. Just as he kicks the chair away, having fashioned a noose out of old typewriter ribbons, he is heard to remark that it has been said that, just at the point when a man is hanged, he sometimes hears heavenly music...The credits begin to roll and Bing croons once more.

Ironical? Possibly. The song alone lends itself to ironic juxtaposition. This same technique was used very effectively with Perry Como's 'Christmas Dream' in the 'Odessa File'. Still, the way that the song was reverently included in its entirety at the beginning and end gives one pause. One thing; the version of 'White Christmas' sounded suspiciously like the 1947 version to me. If so, this is a classic blooper for the books.

David Lobosco, 2533 Rose Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116-2521, USA

I'd like to reply to Stan White's letter in the last magazine. Just because I may remark that a recording Bing made was not to my liking, it is not to say it is not great. As Jim Kukura also wrote "every person has their own taste". I feel that everything Bing has done is worth listening to and collecting. Personally, if a record surfaced of Bing snoring for 30 minutes I would buy it!

It is very naive to believe that everything Bing has ever done is great. However, everything Bing has done is worth listening to. Does Stan White believe that 'The Big Movie Show in the Sky' is comparable in stature to 'White Christmas'? I feel that everyone in this club loves and cherishes Bing Crosby, and I feel it is interesting and okay to express dislikes as well as favourites. That is not to say that we are tearing Bing apart, because for the most part, 95% of what Bing recorded was great. Just because we may say that we are not fond of Bing with Buddy Cole, does not mean that we are writing a letter campaign to the record companies asking them not to issue Bing Crosby CDs.

I am only 23, so I do not hold all of the answers, and maybe I am wrong. Bing Crosby is the greatest singer of all-time and always will be in my book. Although we should mostly express the greatness that was and is Bing Crosby, I feel that we should recognise that no one is infallible.
(Editor: Thanks for your thoughts, David. In the last magazine, Norman Wolfe wondered whether Bing could be a success if he was a young man today. Stan White offers his view.)

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, NN14 6EA

I think that if Bing was at Gonzaga today, he could go on to have success in a show-business career. However that career would be shaped by all of the influences of today and because of that would not be looked on favourably by people who enjoy the multi talents of the Bing Crosby we remember, and his contemporaries. There are entertainers around today who have the same sort of talent as Crosby and Sinatra and apply it to the kind of song associated with Bing and Frank, but they are not the big stars of today. There is no way for them to climb that ladder of success which belonged to Bing and Frank, those days are gone. Nevertheless Bing did it all in his day and nothing can change that, not even when he sang 'McNamara's Band'! Bert Bishop, what the devil are you going on about, and who are the senior collectors who would shake their heads at Bing's performance of that song? It was certainly considered good enough to revive when Bing did that TV special for George O'Reilly in 1966. Seriously, in those days there was still a serious shortage of just about everything in this country, and that

included gramophone records. If I wanted a Crosby record, I had to take what they had in stock, not what I wanted. It also worked in other ways, when I tried to get Bing's "White Christmas", it was out of stock so I purchased Sinatra singing it to fill the gap, and that was an introduction to Frankie which was not a bad thing. One day I was after the Ink Spots singing 'Bless You', it was out of stock so I purchased a version by Archie Lewis singing with the Geraldo Strings, again a diversion which widened my horizons considerably.

Going back to McNamara, it was Bob Haggart providing the backing with quite a number of the Bob Crosby side-men, which is interesting for the sound of those musicians bashing it out in a style not normally associated with them.

Bing's letters to John Scott Trotter provide food for thought. When he talks about not singing anywhere as good as he used to, it does tie in with what I had noticed, which was that the voice which had carried him through the late 1930s, 1940s and through and past the film 'White Christmas' had started to lose its sparkle by the time he recorded the 'High Society' soundtrack. From then on, much depended upon the help given to him by producers and musical directors. There were times in the 1970s when you really thought it was the voice of 30 years earlier, and sometimes it really was as good. As far as good long standing orchestral / band backing is concerned, Bing had much to thank Victor Young, John Scott Trotter and Pete Moore for, especially Pete who looked after Bing when in his 70s.

Jim Newell, 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, Hants SO19 7BJ

Way way back when I was young in the late 1950s, I saw my first SOUNDIE machine. I used to work right in the centre of Southampton at that time and on the ground floor beneath our typewriter workshop was a cafe where a lot of the young people used to gather until late in the evening to listen to the jukebox and drink milkshakes. Ah those were the days! One morning on looking out of my workshop window, I saw that quite a crowd of people had gathered outside the cafe. In those days, not many homes had television. No, it wasn't a television they were looking at, it was a SOUNDIE. The owner of the cafe had invested in a rental contract for one of those machines. For the next few weeks, I did not go home at lunch-time - I stayed in town, bought a milkshake and watched and listened to the Soundie machine, the only one I ever saw and certainly the only one in Southampton. The trouble was it broke down more times than it worked, so the cafe owner had it for about six weeks and then sent it back to the rental company. It was of Italian manufacture. I never saw Bing on it but I do remember seeing Harry James.

To those who do not know what a Soundie machine was, to put it simply it was like a jukebox but instead of seeing records and mechanism, there was a large flat screen which after feeding your sixpence (2.5p) into it, played the music of your choice with the wonderful (at that time) advantage that you could actually see your singer or band (or both) performing on screen right before your very eyes. The wonder of the modern age in England and yet the Americans had had the machine for some years, but over here sadly, either through bad manufacturing or bad marketing, they never caught on in the same way as the jukebox. I have the book on the Soundies but I have not been able to trace much that Bing did for this market although these machines started life in the USA in the 1940s just at a time when Bing was <u>The</u> entertainer. Bob Crosby did films for the Soundies, also Bob Hope, Satchmo and in fact most of the star names of the time, including Alan Ladd, singing? Is there anyone out there in Bingsville land who could tell us if Bing did in fact prepare any films for this medium?
(Editor: I believe that there are video tapes available in the shops containing films which were used on the Soundies but as far as I know there are no Bing items. Anyone know differently?)

Jack Larman, 9 Quinces Croft, Gradebridge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3JT

I was listening to an old Bing record from the early thirties called 'Straight From the Shoulder' and I thought how good it would sound if it had a modern string orchestra backing. Ken Barnes did a magnificent job on the Buddy Cole material when he added a modern backing. I bet if it could be possible to similarly enhance Bing's early hits, it would be a great boost to Bing's reputation. Just imagine songs like 'Love in Bloom', 'Stardust', 'Million Dollar Baby' and 'Can I Forget You' - I could go on and on. I believe it would enhance Bing's voice even more so. I wonder what our readers think. Bing's thirties style with modern big band backing. I reckon 'Dinah' would go down well.
(Editor: The difficulties of adding a modern backing to Bing's old hits are probably insuperable but I seem to recall that some early Bix Beiderbecke tracks were processed in this way. Whether such a venture involving Bing's early records would be commercially viable is doubtful but it is a nice pipe dream. Jack mentioned Ken Barnes and we have received many favourable comments about his recent CDs. Here are a couple of examples.)

Les Brice, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1AT

I thought that the three CD reissue of all the UA tracks was fantastic. The sound of Bing's voice is unbelievable. The richness and warmth due to the digital remastering was never heard before, it was like the Palladium shows all over again when his voice just enveloped you.

What a stunning book 'Bing - A Diary of a Lifetime' is. I use the word stunning in what I consider the word to really mean, in that one is overwhelmed with the host of facts that you have unearthed about the 'old Master'. A truly magnificent piece of work.

John Joyce, 9 Midhurst Grove, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 8XN

....I must truly thank Ken Barnes for all those beautiful

recordings with Pete Moore of a really new dimension Crosby in his 70s. My favourite of these is the best ever version of 'What I Did For Love'. Listen carefully to the expression of voice and phrasing. What he did for a song!

I'm also still looking for the AFRS disc 'Love in Vain' which was played on AFN Germany in 1946. Unless you've heard Bing sing this great song, you ain't heard nothing. Although I'm an OAP on state pension only, I would willingly pay up to £100 out of my savings for a copy of this wonderful Crosby voicing. Also I have a scratchy radio transcription (not for sale) of Ben Bernie and Orchestra 'It All Depends On You' (Bing vocal). So the announcer says it's Bing - does anyone know of this?

Ben Clinkenbeard, 5553 Westwood N. Blvd., Apt #7, Cincinnati, Ohio 45428, USA

....While on vacation in Gatlinburg, Tennessee with my wife, we came across a place called 'Celebrity Golf'. The miniature golf course contained a golf cart owned by Bing and one owned by Bob Hope. Bing's cart was titled 'Crosby a la carte' with a large skimmer for the roof and it also had a pipe coming out of the front....
(Editor: Amazing how Bing turns up all over the place.)

Alf Peyton, 14 St. Georges Drive, Carpenders Park, Watford WD1 5HB

I am enclosing a cutting taken from today's Daily Telegraph. I cannot believe that Bing's rendering of 'Hey Jude' could be picked as a worst record ever made. It would be interesting to know of other members' opinions. I like this track on the LP.
(Editor: Fred Reynolds was rather critical of this song in his book but what do members think?)

Just for the record, it's a lousy show

AMERICA'S shortest and most annoying radio show is also fast becoming one of the most popular, *writes David Sapsted in New York.*

This week, *The Annoying Music Show* will be offered to commercial radio stations across the US, less than two months after it was offered to public radio stations and was snapped up by 110 of them.

The show lasts only three minutes and features what Jim Nayder, its presenter, says are the worst records ever made. "People should be grateful it's only three minutes," he says, "because three minutes feel like 30."

The playlist for the weekly show includes Leonard "Mr Spock" Nimoy's rendition of *Proud Mary,* Bing Crosby slaughtering *Hey Jude,* and Mae West doing an impossibly bad version of *When a Man Loves a Woman.*

Ian Patience, 59 St. Andrews Rd., Ilford, Essex IG1 3PF

Having just read the Summer BING for the second time, I must say it was as usual packed with interest. I was particularly fascinated by the article on Bing's correspondence with John Scott Trotter which certainly shows him in a very good light as regards his concern for Gary and his concern for his working colleagues. Somewhat different from the impression given in certain books and articles.

I have purchased the 'Road to Hollywood' video and can highly recommend it. It is full of fascinating rare material and is so well put together. All this and the complete 'Please' short which is just fabulous and worth the price of the video alone. Thanks again for all your efforts.
(Editor: Festival Films have been encouraged by the sales of the video in the UK and have now released another of their series in the PAL format (i.e. it can be played on video cassette recorders in the UK) and please see Trading Post for details.)

Bill Livesey, 30 O'Hagan Court, Brierfield, Burnley, Lancs

The year 1942, the time 10:30 and a voice came with the record 'Dancing in the Dark' followed by 'Robins & Roses'. That was in hospital in Aberdeen and the voice was of course that of Bing. From that time on, I was hooked and I have had thousands of hours pleasure listening to him. The most marvellous thing was when Bing came to Preston and gave a packed Guild Hall a wonderful night to remember. All I can say is "Thanks, Bing" for giving us all the chance to see him working the stage.

I have often wondered if Bing ever recorded 'Music Maestro Please'. Such a big hit and he seems to have missed it. He does mention it in the song 'There's Nothing I Haven't Sung About'. Also did he ever sing one of Guy Lombardo's numbers 'Seems Like Old Times' ?
(Editor: I have had to give Bill the bad news that Bing does not seem to have ever sung either of these songs on record or radio which was surprising. In fact, there are quite a few songs which Bing seems to have missed completely and straightaway I can mention 'When I Fall In Love' and 'Unforgettable' (hits for Nat Cole), 'High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me)', 'Three Coins in the Fountain', 'When You Wish Upon a Star', 'You'll Never Walk Alone', 'All the Things You Are', 'The Man from Laramie' to name a few. Anyone else like to quote some more examples?)

Lachlan McLean, 8/37 Letitia Street, Oatley, NSW 2223, Australia

I would like to thank Jim Reilly for making me aware of the 24 carat gold collectors CD, 'Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings'. I managed to obtain a copy from Audiophile International in England and it was well worth the inflated price. Although I am mainly a fan of Bing in the 1940s, this is by far my favourite Crosby CD. The songs are all popular standards and Bing's performances

are of the highest quality. In my opinion, Bing's renditions of 'Mountain Greenery', 'September in the Rain', 'The Blue Room' and 'Cheek to Cheek' should be included on any 'Best of Bing' compilation.

From what I have read, this album has received a great deal of criticism because of the modern swinging orchestra. Once again, in my opinion, the orchestration is the best that Bing used during his career. ('Holiday in Europe' would run close second). In fact, Bregman's swinging orchestra seemed to bring out the best in Bing and an album of this nature was certainly the tonic that Bing's career needed in the 1950s. If the album was meant to be a response to Sinatra's 'Swing Easy' and 'Songs for Swingin' Lovers, it was the perfect answer.

Donald Freeman sums up the Bing and Bregman album very well in the sleeve notes-
"Altogether it is quite a musical package - muscular and tender, driving and romantic, pulsating and lyrical."
For those of you who have never heard this album before, I hope you are fortunate enough to pick up a copy of the CD or the original LP, for it is sheer listening pleasure.

On a different note, you may like to know that MCA's 'Thank for the Memories / Merry Christmas' CD made it to number 29 on the New South Wales album charts and number 34 on the Australian charts in December 1996. Earlier in 1996, MCA's 'Top O' the Morning - His Irish Collection' was at number 20 in the New South Wales charts. Hopefully statistics such as these will encourage MCA to release more Crosby material.
(Editor: Thanks Lachlan for the great news about the success of Bing's CDs in the album charts. Whilst talking about Australia, Ron Field tells me that Radio 2CH-Sydney had a special programme featuring Bing and the Andrews Sisters on September 29. It's good to know that Bing is still popular 'down under'.

It's certainly true that the Bing and Bregman album has drawn mixed reviews from our members over the years, mainly due to the orchestral support. Ken Barnes in his book 'The Crosby Years' said:
"....it is very difficult to accept Buddy Bregman seriously as a reliable orchestral accompanist. His writing can be reasonably tasteful on tracks like 'They All Laughed', 'Mountain Greenery' and 'The Blue Room', but his brass scoring is totally ham-fisted and bitterly distracting in 'Cheek to Cheek' and 'I've Got Five Dollars'. And one wonders how Bing ever managed to stay on pitch in the middle of 'Heat Wave' where Bregman has the orchestra playing suspect chords."

Still we all have different opinions and without doubt this album will continue to produce volumes of correspondence.)

Margaret Dutton, 2 East Park, Pensilva, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 5PR

I must thank you for the wonderful BING magazine, always packed with interesting items and articles. I read it from cover to cover as soon as it arrives and then keep coming back to browse through the articles again and again. I loved Lionel's 'Death in the Afternoon' - haven't laughed so much in ages!

I've just heard 'True Love' on the Jimmy Young programme on Radio 2, played at the request of Jim Reilly for the 20th. anniversary of Bing's death. Jimmy said that he doesn't usually do requests, but would make an exception for this one. At the end of the record he said it was 'magic'. It was good to hear the ICC mentioned, well done both Jims!

I fell in love with Bing's voice as a schoolgirl during the war and have loved it ever since. I treasure a letter I had from him when I wrote for his autograph in 1945. Please keep up the good work with the magazine. It's great and well worth all the hard work which must go into its production.

LIONEL'S LINES

"NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH"

You can't win, can you? Here I am, posing as the light relief in this magazine, drivelling away, through issue upon issue, only to discover, that my essays command a mere 50% of the readership. This occurs, so I am reliably informed because some spouses and partners who do not necessarily suffer with la grande obsession, drop me like a hot potato when I start talking about Bing Crosby. Whereas, the Crosbyatti tend to skip the first course, pick up that sizzling tuber, then look for the meat. That is not all. I know that you will be shocked to hear that my integrity is regularly, impugned. Any copy that I may submit for publication, invariably generates an incredulous telephone call, from the Captain of our little craft, politely enquiring, "Is this true?" and sundry correspondence regarding a recent article, outlining certain events in my past, displayed the comments, "almost unbelievable" and "seems too good to be true." This is particularly hurtful as, after almost forty years of marriage, my wife has discovered that I am not really a prince of the blood royal (stolen by gypsies as a child); never played centre half for Blackburn Rovers nor have I ever been the special guest voice on 'The Simpsons'. Notwithstanding, I am still pinning my hopes on some acknowledgement in the 1998 Honours List; a visit from the man with "the big red book" or, even the ultimate accolade - participating in the "Daz Doorstep Challenge".

In the face of the doubters, I shall abandon autobiographical anecdotes at this time and if you really want imagination to be stretched to the limit, review some of the absurdities in the Arts and Language that have been noted over the past year. Having always been a campaigner for a maximum, as well as a minimum wage, I am dumbfounded at the ease with which some fortune hunters manage to extract large sums of money from a gullible public. A storm of protest greeted the portrait of an infamous, child serial killer, composed entirely of children's handprints but did you observe, from the same exhibition, the perspex box filled with buzzing houseflies (if you supply the box, my fishmonger will be pleased to duplicate this for a nominal charge) or the painted broom handle, stuck in a plinth carrying the simple inscription, "Mother".

Once upon a time, picturegoers knew that it would be a good bet that a film starring Betty Grable would be 'a Musical' or Randolph Scott - "a Western" but nowadays, movies seem to have to carry an entirely new set of descriptive labels -"Urban Drama"; "Rites of Passage"; "Blaxploitation"; "Coming of Age"; etc., but I urge you to have no truck with anything described as "quirky" or "offbeat" as you may wind up watching the end result of a project, funded by the National Lottery, creating sculptures to be placed on sandflats in the River Severn and filmed as they are swept off by the Severn Bore (whoever he may be).

After spending seven years on the Play Selection Committee for a local Drama Group, consistently invoking my veto, against Pirandello's, "Six Characters In Search Of An Author", with the certain knowledge that "Getting Gertie's Garter" or "Up In Mabel's Room" would more readily distract our audience from painful seats and dire acting, I realise now what milk and water stuff, I was black-balling. Simple good taste and an aversion to asterisks prevents mentioning the title of a new piece of theatre, still in rehearsal, involving actors, in wheelchairs, trundling around a deserted stage with rhinoceros tusks strapped to their foreheads.

This year, for the first time, I was privileged to witness John Cage's "The Silent Sonata" (sometimes known as "Four Thirty Three"). Let me set the scene. An expectant audience. An empty platform apart from a grand piano. The maestro enters to a splendid ovation. He flips his coat tails, seating himself on the piano stool. He flexes his fingers, folds his hands in his lap and sits in complete silence (I know you're way ahead of me), for precisely, four minutes, thirty three seconds, then rises and takes his bow, again to rapturous applause. You may recall this eminent composer's other smash hit, "Imaginary Landscape No. 4 for Twelve Randomly Tuned Radios."

Anomalies in our language may find ways to amuse you. Ignoring the overuse of the word "basically" which in the media of radio and television, punctuates interviews and conversations with constant and uncanny regularity or the oxymoron, inherent in the phrase, "Highlights of Noel's House Party", I spied the following notice on one of those 17th Century inns which infest the Hertfordshire countryside, "No Hard Hats, Site Boots or Soiled Clothing". A brief survey of the immediate locale revealed only a dilapidated cottage with some scaffolding, propped, precariously around the chimney and a lonely cement mixer in the garden. It could have ended there if it were not for the sheer audacity of a further sign which implored, "Try our Ploughman's Lunch - £3.50" to set me wondering whether those horny-handed, 17th. Century, sons of the soil galloped back to their wretched hovels at midday, bellowing, "Abigail, lay out my dinner jacket, I shall be eating at 'The Jolly Roundheads' today!"

"The Singers and the Song" by Gene Lees discusses the difficulties that the English language poses to writers of romantic ballads. Although, in French, there are more than fifty words to juggle with, there are only four in English (plus one 'cheat' - if you have an American accent) which rhyme with "love". This has involved, over the years, lyricists mentioning "love" an awful lot of times in their songs but trying, at all costs, to avoid using it in a rhyming situation. However, even the most proficient will succumb, as is evidenced by Bing's earliest rendition of a Sammy Cahn number, on the Kraft Music Hall in November 1937:

"....lust like the stars guard the moon, above me,
That's how I'll guard our love,
So, love me, please love me..."

The song was "If It's The Last Thing I Do" and although the tune is adequate Bing tries hard with a somewhat trite lyric which did not prevent the recording by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, lifting it to fourth position in the Hit Parade.

Cahn had all of those qualifications that seem to be essential for becoming a writer of popular songs. He was Jewish, born in 1913, of a first generation immigrant family, on the Lower East Side in New York, with four sisters and a mother who insisted that he learn to play the violin. He changed his name from Cohen to Kohn and Kahn; then went from Kahn to Cahn to avoid confusion with the immortal Gus Kahn. Which composer wrote music for his lyrics appeared to be incidental to his own talents but there were three main partnerships, during his career. The first was with Saul Chaplin with whom he formed his first band and from this alliance came their own adaptation of "Bei Mir Bist Du Schon" and the Andrews Sisters' first million selling hit. The girls were preparing to record the song in its original Yiddish but were overheard, at Decca, by Jack Kapp who had a personal monitoring system permitting him to eavesdrop on each separate studio. We are advised that he shouted, "What are the Andrews Sisters doing, making a race record?" (At this time, the description "race record" covered any record made in foreign language). At Kapp's insistence , Sammy Cahn wrote the new, more acceptable lyrics in the twinkling of an eye and Bing Crosby was pretty quick off the mark too, using it, on radio, in December 1937, a bare month after his famous partners had recorded it. Regrettably, no examples appear to exist of the young Crosby's efforts, in this respect and all that we can rely on is an unsatisfying fragment in a duet with

Caterina Valente from a Bing Crosby Show, televised in 1963.

Two broadcasts of "You're A Lucky Guy" were heard on Kraft in January 1940. It enjoyed a measure of popularity and had already been featured by the likes of Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Gene Krupa. Bing bounces along with the Music Maids, merrily enough ("...when you consider the highest bidder can't buy that gleam in your eye...") but without mustering anything that might warrant superlatives.

By 1942, Sammy had begun the second of his major collaborations with another composer and earned the first of his astonishing 26 Oscar nominations. The composer was Jule Styne and the song, "I've Heard That Song Before", written for Republic's minor musical. "Youth On Parade". There's a family connection here. The song was introduced in the film by Bob Crosby and his Orchestra and was beaten to the Academy Award by none other than "White Christmas" but two splendid renditions on radio, by Bing, of this losing entry still survive from early 1943 and deserve the highest regard.

A second nomination for the team came in 1944 for "I'll Walk Alone" sung by Dinah Shore in "Follow The Boys". Inevitably, on this occasion it lost to "Swinging On A Star" but it will always be regarded as a wartime "standard" with its sentimental theme, admirably encapsulating the agony of waiting for a loved one's return. Bing never recorded it and surprisingly, never seems to have aired the song until its revival in 1952 when he gave it a couple of whirls on Chesterfield.

Bing was also a little slow on the uptake in recording, "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow" which topped the charts for Vaughn Monroe, in 1946 when he used it on the Warner Bros album, "I Wish You A Merry Christmas" in 1962. It has now become a perennial Christmas/Winter favourite and perhaps Bing should have recorded the song, at the same time that he demonstrated it, so ably, 16 years previously in the closing batch of Kraft Music Hall programmes.

There are subtle differences between all three of the renditions of "I Still Get Jealous" from Philco Radio Time (written for the successful Broadway production "High Button Shoes" staring Phil Silvers and Nanette Fabray), proving, to some extent that Bing sang it on three different occasions but so far none of these versions have been issued in any medium. The same cannot be said for "It's Magic" (another Oscar nomination) which also made three appearances on Philco in 1948; that year when Bing recorded only two sides with simply rhythm and choral accompaniment. This was due to a Union strike which, effectively banned all musicians from recording sessions. No differences can be detected between the two of the versions broadcast but I am in the position to advise that you that the only example ever to be issued, on Magic AWEI - "Bing's Magic", came from the programme of 27th October 1948 because the master for this issue originated from my own tatty tape collection.

It may be hard to imagine our Mr. Crosby, in his middle years, coming to grips with a song designed to be sung by Mario Lanza but such was the case with "Because You're Mine" with music by Nicholas Brodsky, from the film of the same name. This was a further (losing) nominee for that coveted award and yet again, it had three showings, this time on General Electric. The curious thing here is that one of these appearances, on the programme of 1st. January 1953, was as part of a medley. The other two songs featured in this medley, "You Belong To Me" and "Wish You Were Here" are among the most common of radio tracks to be issued on record or compact disc. Was Bing's rendition of "Because You're Mine" considered unworthy for inclusion? For the sake of a performance lasting less than two minutes, I would prefer to make up my own mind, in this respect but the other possibility is, that the 'medley' had been 'assembled' for that particular show by tape-editing.

Sammy Cahn stepped up to receive that first elusive Oscar in 1954, his last shot with Jule Styne. In 1955, "The

Sammy Cahn (far right) with (l to r) Jimmy Van Heusen, David Kossoff, Peggy Lee & Bing on a 1960 TV show

Voice's" wordsmith joined "The Groaner's" composer and in that year, Cahn competed with himself, (not for the first or the last time), in a dual nomination for "(Love Is) The Tender Trap" with his new partner, James Van Heusen and "I'll Never Stop Loving You" with music by Nicholas Brodsky. Dare I say that I am not enamoured with Bing's interpretation of the latter from his last radio series with Buddy Cole. He sounds much more at home with "The Tender Trap" (from the same radio source) and here we have the opportunity of pondering the relative merits of the original against the augmented version with the Pete Moore Orchestra. On the other hand, I am not about to become embroiled in comparisons between Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra - I enjoy listening to both of them but the first Oscar for the Cahn / Van Heusen team is coming up, written for Sinatra in "The Joker Is Wild". Here's how Bing introduces it on the Ford Road Show of 13th March 1958, "...I'm going to sing the song that 'the thin one' has warbled into a big fat hit -'All the way' I have reference to..." before stamping it with his own mellow authority.

Two years later came another Sinatra film entitled, "A Hole in the Head" and another of those golden statuettes was successfully pouched for "High Hopes". Bing recorded the song for the "Thoroughly Modern Bing" album in 1968 with the Bugs Bower Orchestra but there is a lesser heard parodied chorus, circa 1963, with Jimmy Van Heusen providing piano accompaniment, to bolster a fund-raising appeal for the composer's old Alma Mater.

Let Sammy Cahn's own words take up the story regarding the last "winner", "....the song was written not for Frank Sinatra or Jack Jones who both recorded it but Fred Astaire, who didn't. A film called "Papa's Delicate Condition" to star Fred Astaire, resulted in our writing the song. The script was replete with the word 'irresponsible'. I turned to Van Heusen and said, 'Do you like, call me irresponsible, call me unreliable, throw in undependable, too?' He did and went to the piano. In about an hour we had the song. After hearing it, Astaire asked if I would like to know how I got the assignment. I said I would and he said, 'Johnny Mercer was out of town!' I said, 'that's a high compliment!' He said, 'No! The compliment is, next time Mercer leaves town I won't worry about it!' - the story of a song I'm glad I wrote!" But we have to trawl the depths of the television archives to unearth a representative example of "Call Me Irresponsible" demonstrated by Bing Crosby and it turns out to be another of those tantalising scraps from a medley, found in "The Carol Burnett Show" recorded in 1969. Some measure of consolation may be found in that, this time he enjoys the distinguished company of Ella Fitzgerald.

You will, no doubt, be aware that Sammy Cahn wrote songs for six films which featured Bing. Among others, either recorded or used on radio are, "Shoe Shine Boy"; "Vict'ry Polka"; "It's Been a Long, Long Time"; "Day by Day"; "Saturday Night (is the Loneliest Night of the Week)"; "Five Minutes More"; "The Things We Did Last Summer"; "What Am I Gonna Do About You?"; "Look to Your Heart"; "A Home in the Meadow"; etc., etc. He died in 1993, looking forward to his eightieth birthday.
In the event that you have not identified those other three words that rhyme with "love" listen to Bing singing, "People Will Say We're In Love", "Sierra Sue" and "Baby Face". The slight "cheat" mentioned, can be found in "They Can't Take That Away From Me".

Lionel Pairpoint

ONCE IN A WHILE

James Stewart died on July 2, aged 89. One of the legendary screen greats who was five times nominated for an Academy Award. He won the Oscar for Best Actor for his performance in 'The Philadelphia Story' in 1940 and on the orders of his father, he sent his Oscar back to the family hardware store in Pennsylvania for display in the shop-window. Many will remember Jimmy Stewart for his roles in 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' (1939), 'It's a Wonderful Life' (1946), 'Harvey' (1950), 'Winchester 73' (1950), 'Bend of the River' (1952) and 'Anatomy of a Murder' (1959) to name but a few. 'The Philadelphia Story' was of course re-made as a musical called 'High Society' but there are other links with Bing. James Stewart appeared on Bing's radio shows on eight occasions starting with the Philco show of March 10, 1948. Also he took over as m.c on the show broadcast on November 6, 1952 as Bing was absent due to the death of his wife. Both Bing and Jimmy acted as narrators on the MGM film 'That's Entertainment' (1974). As a tribute to him, BBC televised a repeat of an interview with Stewart conducted by Michael Parkinson in the 1970s and what a very real and decent man he appeared to be.

Jimmy and Bing rehearse for a radio show

Ben Hogan passed away on July 25 - he was 84. Hogan was one of the great names of golf. He was the son of a motor mechanic who committed suicide while the then nine-year old Ben was in the same room. Ben Hogan won his first tournament in 1939 but it was in 1946 that he burst to the fore by winning 13 of the 32 tournaments in which he played. In January, 1949, he was involved in a serious car accident when there was a head-on collision with a bus. He threw himself across his wife's lap, by way of protecting her from the impact of the collision and by so doing, was generally held to have saved

both her life and his own. He suffered a double fracture of the pelvis and a broken collarbone. He was in hospital for weeks, his recovery hampered by a tendency for his blood to clot. There were fears that he would never play golf again but a year later he was back in tournaments. Three of Hogan's four US Opens were won after the crash, as were both his Masters and his British Open Championship. Ben Hogan's life was featured in the film 'Follow the Sun' (1951) in which Glenn Ford starred as Hogan.

Hogan won Bing's National Pro-Am at Pebble Beach in 1949, two weeks before his serious car accident. Bing and Ben Hogan were frequent companions on the golf course. In 1956 Bing was persuaded by Hogan to be his partner and compete again in the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, having last played in 1953. In March 1957, the two men played together in a Pro-Am at Seminole Golf Club, Juno Beach, Florida. On March 21, 1960, they again played together at Tequesta, Florida and the following year they participated in a benefit golf match at the Seminole Club with Byron Nelson and Jimmy Demaret to raise funds for ailing golf star Ed (Porky) Oliver. Coincidentally this event was mentioned in a letter to the Palm Beach Post earlier this year which we reproduce alongside. Bing and Ben teamed up to compete in another Pro-Am at the Seminole Club on March 27 and 28, 1961. They also appeared in two films together namely "Don't Hook Now" (1942) and "Faith, Hope and Hogan" (1953).

How times change

It is great to see Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Chi Chi Rodriguez getting together to raise money for Chi Chi's kids and charging $25,000 each for 17 players to join with them. How times change!

We witnessed another foursome many years ago at Seminole Golf Club which would have easily commanded today's big money. They were playing 18 holes for the benefit of another beloved golf pro named "Porky" Oliver, who had come down with cancer. Everyone was welcome and there was no admission — they merely passed the hat. That foursome was Jimmy Demeret, Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan and Bing Crosby. It was a day to remember.

Sawyer Thompson, Jr.
Juno Beach

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

The repetition of Crosby movie fare is akin to a recurring decimal point which can be neither varied nor terminated, and whilst this comment is in no way intended to demean the actual films, of course, were it not for the fact that the ICC likes to chronicle and assemble as much fact about Bing as possible, through this magazine and other extremely detailed and well produced publications, it would be tempting to disregard this regularity and go straight to whatever newer material has been seen and heard. However, first things first, and all film screenings are noted herewith as usual.

AUGUST

ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS	Sky Movies Gold	24th.
STAGECOACH	Sky Movies Gold	22nd.
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Movies Gold	19th.
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG	Sky Movies Gold	21st.
WHITE CHRISTMAS	Sky Movies Gold	20th.
BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	18th.
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	TNT	12th.
HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	29th.
RIDING HIGH	C4	25th.

SEPTEMBER

HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	1st. 10th. 20th. 27th.
SCARED STIFF	Sky Movies Gold	1st.
OFF LIMITS	Sky Movies Gold	22nd.
MY FAVOURITE BLONDE	Sky Movies Gold	30th.

OCTOBER

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	TNT	20th.
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT 2	TNT	21st.
BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	26th

An encouraging four weeks in August, but what happened to October, the month of the special anniversary? Clearly, none of the satellite channels was aware of the significance of the occasion, but following on the near saturation point for Presley, all over the world, one wonders at the total lack of response or interest in Bing's demise just a few months later. A repeat Biography on the History Channel, at the very least, would have been very appropriate and most welcome. 'Phone calls and letters are the order of the day and if there's anything to report before this column is put to bed you will read it here. Fortunately, terrestrial TV and radio, the BBC in particular, have been more forthcoming, and Channel 4's screening of RIDING HIGH on Bank Holiday Monday was very welcome. This film is a remake of the 1934 BROADWAY BILL, which prompts me to ponder on just how many remakes Bing starred in. Four come to mind straight away, and a little research may reveal even more. There's a lot of interesting facts concerning the making of

this tear-jerker, racetrack movie, and I would refer readers to Fred Reynolds' book, 'Road To Hollywood', for his very enlightening expansion of most of them. While there is no, true ballad, there's a batch of lively numbers and a clutch of some of the best supporting actors in the business.

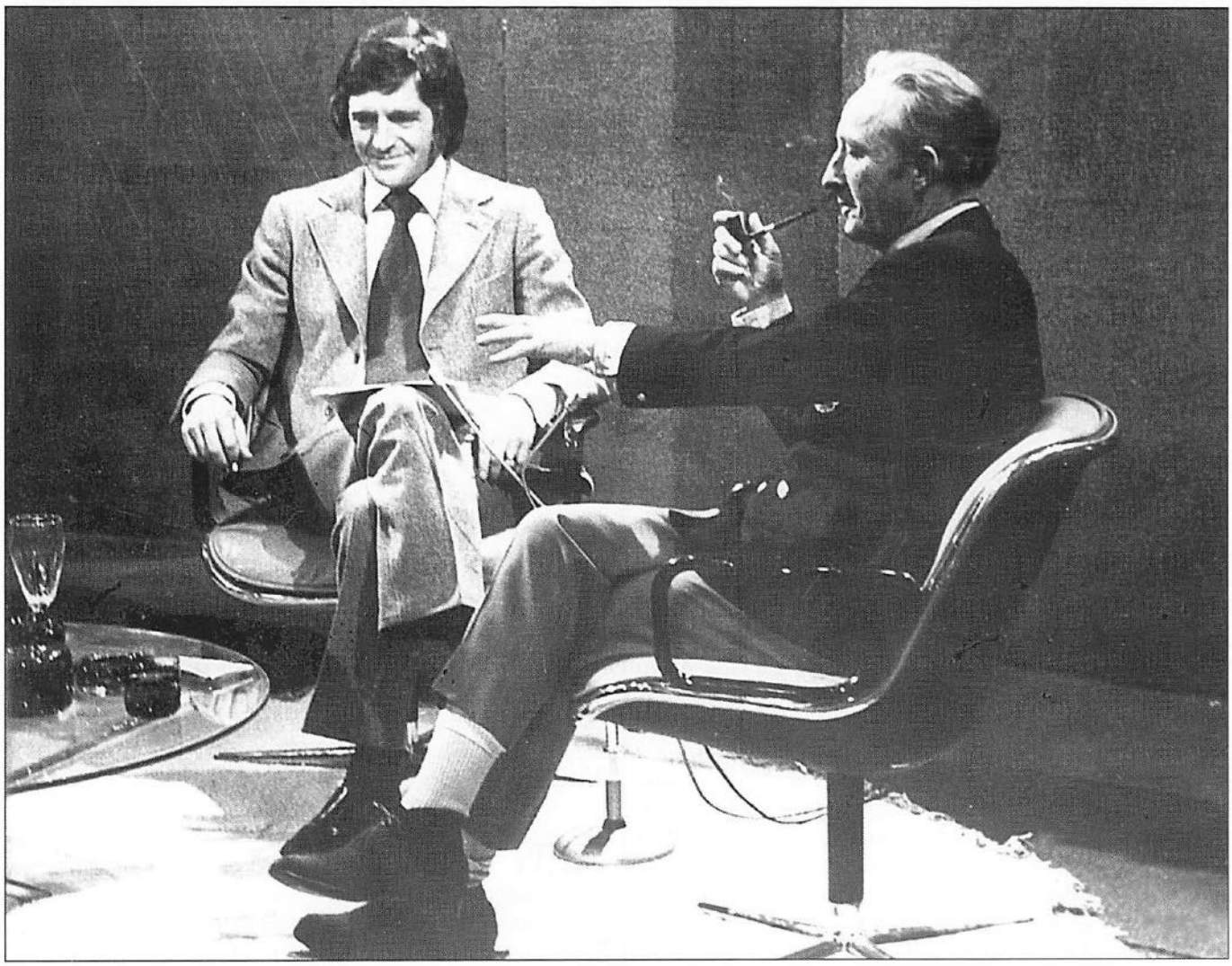
Clarence Muse and Bing worry about 'Broadway Bill' with jockey Frankie Darro in 'Riding High'.

PARKINSON The Bing Crosby Interview

Delayed for one week, the edited re-run of the 23rd. December 1972 show was broadcast on BBC1 at 10.20pm on Friday 29th. September 1997. In a repeat series of some his best shows Parky, still looking good some twenty-five years on, introduced the ensuing reprise by first showing a segment of the original wherein Bing describes the prank played on the Jesuit priest overseeing the making of the film THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S. In the closing, tear-jerker scene Sister Benedict (Ingrid Bergman), leaving for a sanatorium, embraced Bing and gave him a really heavy 'soul job' kiss causing the humourless Father Devlin to nearly faint on the spot! "Crosby is arguably the most popular entertainer of this century. For fifty years he was the biggest single draw in show business, and for twenty years the most popular singer in the world", were among the introductory comments from Michael Parkinson before time travelling back to the original broadcast. This began with Bing singing a song or two from his childhood performing days, partially recalling, or re-writing, the lyrics of "Ben Bolt" "One Fleeting Hour" and "I've Got A Dog Called Rover". "Dramatic stuff for a 12-year-old", suggested Bing. Well, most ICC members will have seen this notable coup by the Parkinson production team at that time and will recall that Bing was coaxed into an anecdotal mini-autobiography, with clips from the Mack Sennett DREAM HOUSE, the aforementioned reprise of his Father O'Malley role, and HIGH SOCIETY. The latter being just a brief look at "Well, Did You Evah?" during an exploration of the Crosby/Sinatra 'rivalry' which Bing denied existed. Just who did make that comment about the other that 'Crosby/Sinatra is a singer who comes along once in a lifetime. Why did it have to be my lifetime?'. I've read and heard it attributed to both parties and wonder if anyone knows the real origin.

Asked if it were possible to state a favourite song among the great many he had sung, Bing hesitatingly chose the Irving Berlin composition indelibly associated with him, and closed the show with yet another rendition of the famous yuletide classic. But before the musical finale Parky had, this year, added his own closure:
"Bing Crosby died in 1977 of a heart attack, aged 74, and nobody who knew him well was surprised it happened on a golf course. He was an affable, charming and talented man, but also a tough professional. I once worked with him when a young and nervous director kept asking him to retake a song

which he'd done perfectly first time of asking. Now Bing was known as One-take Crosby', with a dislike of wasting time; so the the director was on thin ice. Finally, Bing said to the young man; 'Can I ask you why you really want me to do that song again?', and the director said 'Because I think I can do it better.' Bing smiled, 'I can't', he said. And that was that, steel hand, velvet glove. One final observation, the only bit of gossip I know about Bing Crosby is this, he couldn't remember the words to "White Christmas", so he had them written on cue cards!"



PARKINSON The Bob Hope Interview

The previous week's re-run was devoted to Leslie Townes Hope, also known as Packy East and various other, unofficial aliases. Bing featured prominently in this show, too. A clip from the TV broadcast of the opening of the Madison Square Gardens building saw Bing refereeing a comedy boxing match between Hope and Rocky Marciano at the conclusion of which he fell victim to the pat-a-cake routine. "Boy, I'd been waiting thirty years to do that!" chortled Bob. Taking advantage of the studio facilities available for his wife's daily TV programme Bing recorded an amusing parody of "The Pleasure Of Your Company" which Parky interpolated in the interview. Bob was up to some suitable and affectionately barbed responses to Bing's musical jibe: "Isn't it just great that he would stand up that long!" Also shown was the famous clip from THE ROAD TO MOROCCO wherein the camel spits in Bob's face. Bing creases up, and gives the beast a hearty slap of approval, and, as we all know, the scene take was printed and included in the film. Parky eventually, though with some difficulty, pinned Bob down to relating, seriously, how he had first met and eventually worked with his film and radio sparring partner. Here again there is room for definitive historical accuracy though it is always interesting to hear varying versions. So, here we had two consecutive Friday nights when the square box really was worth watching!

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Comedy actor-script writer Eric Sykes was the guest castaway for an August edition of the Sue Lawley hosted BBC radio series of earlier, Roy Plomley fame, who initiated the long-running programme. Eric spoke warmly of Bing. "I played golf with him a few times and I thought what a lovely man. We were brought up with Bing Crosby - and I used to do impressions of him." He related how his impression of Der Bingle once got him the sack when, head in a bucket, to create resonance, he warbled "Where The Blue Of The Night" to fellow factory workers. Upon emerging from the makeshift microphone he was dismayed to find himself in the presence of his manager, with the remainder of the cotton mill staff hard at work.

"Get your cards" was the inevitable response! The record chosen as the first of his allotted eight was "Blues In The Night", the 1942 version. Sadly, only time for a couple of choruses though. However, Eric was soon to be participating in similar vein in another BBC radio programme about Bing. Read on.

THE COMPLEAT CROSBY

Tuesday, 22nd. September BBC R2 was the time and place to be for yet another of those near inventive, half-truth programmes so beloved of latter-day presenters - in this case Russell Davis. The introductory comment that it would contain a few surprises rang the alarm bells straight away. In fact the only real surprise is that twenty years after Bing's death they still can't get their facts right. Initially, the amazing unawareness of Bing's true birth date - now widely known and published on compact discs, for example, makes one wonder why producers don't contact the various appreciation societies when compiling these programmes. The hour long programme was so littered with glaring errors and unbalanced reporting that I nearly gave up on it. For instance, the comment 'Until Elvis gyrated on the to the scene (Bing) sold more records than anyone else.', thereby suggesting that Presley sold more, is greatly disputed, unsubstantiated tosh. And to describe Bing's three 1939 films PARIS HONEYMOON, EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN and THE STAR MAKER as "Stinkers every one." shows a complete and incomprehensible lack of understanding of the reason for Bing's status as a top box-office draw. Okay, GONE WITH THE WIND his films were not, but the public flocked to the cinema to see and hear Bing perform. The modest plots were of little consequence; serving only as vehicles for this unique entertainer who by his relaxed style and unrivalled vocal expertise could charm the birds out of the trees with a deceptive ease that had one entranced in a such a way that no other artiste had achieved before or since. To put down such beautiful ballads of the calibre of "I Have Eyes", "You're A Sweet Little Headache", "East Side Of Heaven", "That Sly Old Gentleman" and "A Man And His Dream" is an insult not only to some of the greatest song writers of all time but also to the millions of cinema-goers who flocked to their local picture houses and loved every minute.

The programme drew heavily on the fourteen hour series of 1973, and may be considered a highly condensed version of same with previously heard contributions from Phil Harris, Hoagy Carmichael, Artie Shaw, Kitty Carlisle, and Rudy Vallee on Bing's early career, described and musically illustrated by recordings not only by Bing but also by Vallee, Mildred Bailey and Russ Columbo. Some were ill at ease with Bing's so-called 'aloofness' or were in awe of his professional stature. Not Rosemary Clooney."A strange thing that Frank Sinatra said to me one time. 'How can you be comfortable with him?' and I said I don't understand what you mean. 'Well, he's Bing Crosby.' and I said to tell you the truth I pretend like he isn't Bing Crosby." On the subject of Bing and Frank - who always acknowledged Bing's influence - Eric Sykes again, then and now a Crosby man. "You can imagine him out in the garden weeding and singing a little chorus of something. Now can you imagine Sinatra out in the garden, weeding?" New York, New York, it's a wonderful town.', he warbled. "It doesn't go with botany!" Cue for Bing singing "Aren't You Glad You're You?"

An interesting musical interpolation was a selection of songs demonstrating flattery by imitation from Perry Como, Michael Holliday, Tony Mercer, Dave King, Dean Martin, Dick Todd, Harlan Lattimore and the aforementioned Vallee/Columbo duo. Mostly with snippets of songs associated with 'The Boss'. Among those contributing verbally were David Jacobs, Dorothy Lamour, The Andrews Sisters, Red Buttons, Carroll Carroll and Ted Rogers. Producer Ken Barnes was given time to describe, briefly, Bing's late-flowering re-emergence nicely pointed up with the Palladium version of "That's What Life Is All About." Other Crosby recordings featured were "Where The Blue Of The Night" (1931), "I Love You Samantha", "I've Got The Girl", "Side By Side", "Muddy Water", "The Way You Look Tonight", "I Surrender, Dear", "It Must Be True", "Love In Bloom" (s/t), "Love Thy Neighbour" (1947), "Moonlight Becomes You", "Ac-cent-tchu-ate The Positive" (s/t), "I'll Capture Your Heart", "Pistol Packin' Mama", "Sam's Song", "The Second Time Around" and "Straight Down The Middle".

It was left to Eric Sykes, once more, to put a final, significant comment on Bing's appeal in remembrance of his untimely though amazingly appropriate departure from the world's stage. "I was really shattered, because I thought well, there's a light gone out. In fifty years time they'll still be playing Crosby records; but I doubt that there's going to be a candle-lit mass for Oasis."

KEN BARNES

John Richards 'Magical Memories' programme on Radio Lincolnshire is one of my favourite radio shows - sadly, heard only when John James sends me a cassette of a particular event. The 11th. July is a case in point when Ken Barnes again guested to discuss with J.R. the release of the '50th. Anniversary Concert' CD. Ken explained that Bing didn't want a video recording of the Palladium show but was quite happy for Ken to produce an audio album. Originally released as a double LP set Ken had less control of content then than the recent re-release, which was more like how he always wanted it to be. By reducing the reissue to a single CD and cutting out most of the Crosby family the resulting product becomes more of a tribute to Bing's re-emergence, after forty years, as 'a working singer', as Ken put it. As luck would have it the first time commercial release of "Great Day" was quite definitely a one-off, for Bing had sung it only at a rehearsal and, just by chance, on the night of the recording. J.R. played this track, and before going on to "Where The Morning Glories Grow" and "At My Time Of Life" described how a lady radio producer friend had seen a figure, that turned out to be Bing dressed as a cleaner, back stage at the Palladium sweeping around everyone before wandering off without saying a word! Ken gave a little insight into Bing's early years of some irresponsibility coupled with a not terribly ambitious attitude to his career.

As Bob Crosby put it: "Bing just rolled uphill." I've noticed Ken's frequent repetition of the expression; "With Bing, what you see is what you get" which, in his working relationship, with Mr. C must have been extremely rewarding.

Ken found Rosemary Clooney to be a 'lovely human being' who Bing had rescued from a nervous breakdown by putting her on the bill of a big St. Patrick's Day spectacular, thereby giving her a whole, new career. Before J.R. played this their second recording of "On A Slow Boat To China" Ken described the 'wall of death' recording technique of singers sharing one microphone - "but the way they balance each other is absolutely perfect", Ken observed. At around this point in the programme J.R. asked Ken if there was any artiste Bing didn't get on with. Ken said he had heard of a time in the late 'Forties when an exasperated Bing walked out of a recording session never to return. No names stated or even suggested, but I'm thinking right now of the unusual situation where Bing made only one track with a performer at around that time. That Bing liked to record with the band is well known to Crosby afficionados, but it doesn't hurt to remind listeners how good Bing was in this respect and Ken stressed Bing's 'feel' for a song, even when unfamiliar with the melody, when working in this way. Of all the tracks Ken produced only a handful had the vocals added later, and then only because Bing had an unavoidable business appointment. John Richards asked about the forthcoming 3-CD set of all the United Artists tracks which Ken described with considerable enthusiasm - the two that Bing cut with Bob Hope in 1958 completing the U.A. involvement in Bing's recording career.

Ken's next appearance on 'Magical Memories' was on the 6th. September wherein the by now recently released U.A. album came in for detailed discussion and exposure. Ken explained that when EMI took over U.A. the original mix-downs were lost and this gave him the opportunity to re-mix and re-master the entire collection to a much higher degree of perfection. The sound being purer than on the original releases. The first track to be played was "That's What Life Is All About", and John Richards prompted Ken to expand on the lyric credits. Bing did not like the original words and Ken offered to tailor it to suit Bing's persona. Bing also wrote his own version which, as Ken described, was scribbled on a scrap of paper headed The North Atlantic Salmon Emergency! "Bing was very ecologically minded.", he explained. Working numerically through the collection John asked about CD number two, 'The Pleasure Of Your Company'. Here we have what one might call the 'duets' album as the sub-title 'Bing Crosby and some Good Companions' clearly conveys. Most of the ensuing discussion centred on Bing with Johnny Mercer who, in Mercer's studio, introduced producer Mr. Barnes to Mr. Crosby, thereby cementing yet another and very fruitful partnership. Pete Moore, the musical director arranged just a 'sketch' comprising piano, bass and drums for Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer to perform this title track to. This was in the October of 1974. It wasn't until February 1975 that a full, big band sound was added. In a soundbite of intriguing coincidence Ken revealed that as a child of about four the first popular record that he became aware of was "Small Fry", "never dreaming that one day I'd work with these two fellas!"

From 'Come Share The Wine' the final track was "My Resistance Is Low", an alternate take, and though an admirer of Hoagy Carmichael's work this was not a song Bing was familiar with. Having been played two previous, hit versions, including Hoagy's, Bing decided to eschew their more intimate delivery and once again go for a big band sound; a challenge which Pete Moore took up with relish. Ken revealed how the entire product, including the magnificent twenty-page booklet, though an awful lot of work, had by expanding everything and bringing it all up to date, been a labour of love. John pointed out that there was something for everyone, not just Crosby collectors and that it had all been worth while. Ken replied:
"I've been a producer of records for thirty years and I'm prouder of this than anything that I have ever done."

BARNSEY AND THE BOSS

No relation to the foregoing producer, Paul is a prominent personality in entertainment and may be seen from time to time on Anglia based TV, waggling his aviator wings over the Eastern Counties or, best of all, heard on his very popular BBC Norwich radio programme. Paul is a member of the ICC so it is not unnatural that Harry Lillis is well to the forefront and, in fact, he recently offered the new CD 'MEMORIES' to any listener who could tell him what Bing's given, first name was. Paul is the grateful recipient of many complimentary CDs and so this year's Bing bonanza has given him an extremely wide choice which he has exploited to the full, covering the Crosby career from Whiteman to Pete Moore. Having a particular penchant for the likes of Connee Boswell, Johnny Mercer, the Dorsey family and Joe Bushkin, it is not surprising that Bing tracks associated with these musical supremos make regular and welcome appearances Each month the calendar photo is described and, if available, played. The occasional non-availability is highlighted by the September illustration of "Your Love". Not a ballad that we associate with The Boss though the sheet music advises us that it was 'successfully introduced' by our man. This would appear to be highly unlikely as this 1934 Walter Gross-Ned Washington ballad does not, currently, appear in Frans van der Kolff's comprehensive 'Songography', though during a pleasurable meeting with Frans this year he told me there was to be a supplement issued soon. A little research reveals that the song was featured by soft-voiced singer Elmer Feldkamp (who?) with the Freddy Martin Orchestra on Br.6905. In the absence, then, of Bing ever performing this number, and by way of 'sounds like' first word substitution, Paul played a couple of tracks which were about as polarised as one could imagine, namely; Bing with the "soft mess accompaniment that could be served up with a spoon" by Guy Lombardo on "You're Beautiful Tonight, My Dear", followed by the lively duet with Louis Jordan & His Tympany Five and, as far as Bing is concerned, the very close to home "Your Socks Don't Match". In a tie up between Bing, Bushkin and Tommy Dorsey we had, first, that great jazz number "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn" which the rapidly emerging jazz singer-cum-crooner

performs so expertly with the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. It led to Paul saying how T.D. made odious comparisons between Bob Crosby and his famous sibling - the latter being the better of course. "Tommy Dorsey always was a bit of a bastard", noted Paul, and quoted a couple of instances. One day Joe Bushkin, arriving rather late and in an obvious 'hungover' state, plonked himself down at the piano only to hear Dorsey say, "You used to work for us." On another occasion Bushkin was set upon by Buddy Rich in a car-park and Joe, thinking Tommy had come to rescue him, was dismayed to hear instead, "The jackets! Take off the jackets!" - referring to the band's immaculate uniforms. Paul then played the false-start "Personality" in which Bing, himself, has a little dig at 'Boxing Gloves' Bushkin.

The MCA, member-compiled 'MEMORIES' has been dipped into by most of the record programme presenters and, always happy to air the unusual, Paul played a trinity comprising "When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby", "The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair" and "I Didn't Slip, I Wasn't Pushed, I Fell". The first, a Stan White special, has been on CD before, as has the second. But not the Sy Oliver number; the overall performance prompting Paul to express regret that Bing had recorded so little with this superior band - only one other track. Of 'Pigtails' the clumsy title highlights the transposition of a preposition, which Paul also noted, giving the English interpretation: 'The girl with her hair in pigtails'. However, the entire lyric and melody would have to have been quite different to achieve that grammatical correctness. One of my earliest 78s, and much too enjoyable to get 'picky' over. From radio Barnsey included Mickey Rooney's "I'll Never Fall In Love Until The Next Time" - and he should know! - and the hilarious parody of "Goodnight Irene", the Crosby-Hope-Garland version from which, Paul observed, "hopefully, the song never recovered!"

This brief, melodic excursion to a saner and less frenetic County only scratches the surface of musical Crosbyana which has been featured on Barnsey's delightful and informative programme since the last trip into the hinterland of that region, about which my admittedly elderly ordnance survey map states: 'Here be dragons'.

ANTIPODEAN AIRTIME

'MY KINDA MUSIC - MAINLY BING' is the title of a local station radio broadcast hosted by Ron Field who hails from Bermagui, New South Wales, way down on the west coast of Australia. His show goes out mid-day, and the one we look at here was broadcast 'live' on Friday the 5th. of September. The high ratio of Bing to other recordings, here being nineteen-to-fifteen, the programme, No. 12, was aptly titled. The reason this has come to hand is due to the then recent, tragic Paris underpass accident and Ron's dedication of the programme to the two, principal victims. Thirty-four tracks played in two hours reveals that this is an all-music record show with the chat kept to the barest minimum. Ron played songs and music with titles, or lyrics, that he felt were appropriate for the occasion. Beginning with "Going My Way" and closing with "Now Is The Hour" the intervening Crosby content included "Tea For Two", "Yes Indeed", "Paradise", "Someday We'll Meet Again", "Dinah", "Down By The River", "Sweethearts" and "When Day Is Done".

Along with his letter and cassette of his programme came news of what films had been shown on Cable TV in N.S.W.. The August viewing included HIGH SOCIETY, RIDING HIGH, DIXIE and MR. MUSIC. Two 'Road' films, MOROCCO and SINGAPORE being featured on their Channel 7. Ron has been active in contacting the various TV stations concerning Bing's 20th. anniversary date, but the signs of interest were not encouraging.

MAGGIE'S MUSIC

An enthusiastic and indomitable figure on the Crosby scene some two hundred and fifty miles west of the Dengie Hundred, where I reside, is one Margaret Ryan - Maggie to all her many friends, of course. Like many others she is dedicated to the task of bringing the voice of Bing Crosby to listeners to the wireless in that considerable region comprising Bristol, Bath, Somerset, Devon, Wales and the Isle of Man. The continued, generous supply of CDs from the U.S.A., and other sources, ensures that all the local radio stations are kept supplied and informed of what's new on the Bing scene. Chris Robinson, BBC R. South & West, is probably the most supportive, regularly playing a nicely balanced variation of Bing during the course of his 'Mystery Year' quiz. "The Very Thought Of You", "I Only Want A Buddy Not A Sweetheart", "South Sea Island Magic", "The Old Lamplighter", "Now Is The Hour", "I'm An Old Cowhand", "When The World Was Young" and the original version of "Where The Blue Of The Night" is a fair representation, not only of Bing's recordings but also of Chris's selections. Add, among others, such duets as "The Way You Look Tonight", "People Will Say We're In Love", "Pick Yourself Up" and "True Love" and it may be seen that virtually every age of the Crosby voice is presented and all tastes catered for. The latter duet was one of three songs that Maggie had played to celebrate her daughter's wedding to Paul on the 9th. August. Judith Ley played "I Love You Samantha" (and no prizes for guessing the bride's name!), and Anne Hopper forsook the Crosby cause on this occasion with the Andrews Sisters' "Yes, My Darling Daughter".

'Music For You' is the ongoing title of BBC Devon as presented by Graham Danton. Along with all the others he has been dipping into new releases, more recently the United Artists' 3-CD set. The re-issue of the two Bing and Bob Hope tracks has found favour and all the regions' programme hosts have played one or both. During the course of one of his programmes Graham related an interesting anecdote regarding Harry Ruby, the composer of "Three Little Words". Having played the Ellington - Rhythm Boys track he went on to relate how Ruby had always wanted to be a professional baseball player and managed to get himself signed to play a match for the famous Washington Senators. He wanted to be taken seriously, so was dismayed when on the great day the

commentator announced to the crowd that playing today was the composer of that very well known song. His captain promptly conducted the crowd with his baseball bat encouraging them to sing along. Harry lost his cool, fluffed a pass, (well reported in the press next day of course!) and forever after hated that song.

Sadly, the deadline for copy of the current 'BING' magazine is just on the cusp of the principle week for remembering the 20th. anniversary of Bing's demise. There will be an enormous amount of radio material to hand within the next ten days or so but all too late for this Christmas issue. The entire Graham Danton tribute among them. Featured on it will be a poem entitled, simply, 'Bing', submitted by David Prowse of Cornwall who has composed it especially for the event. Read over a musical accompaniment it should be a particularly enjoyable part of the programme.

Also heard from the land of the prevailing weather have been tracks from Keith Fordyce: "Stardust", "Come Share The Wine", "Spring, Spring, Spring", "Pick Yourself Up" and "My Resistance Is Low", all but one of that group from the U.A. anniversary set. Anne Hopper wades in with a track or two and became quite enthusiastic about "South Rampart Street Parade" from the alleged, complete Crosby - Andrews Sisters collection. David Lowe, 9pm BBC Bristol, is quite a 'Thirties man with his selections, playing "Here Lies Love", "Sweethearts", "Little Lady Make-Believe," "Sing A Song Of Sunbeams", "Temptation" and Maggie's particular favourite Bing, from 1946, "The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else". David is the only presenter, so far, whom I have heard feature the "Session Sound Bites" from the Ken Barnes collection. The 'Harry Lillis And A Little Covered Wagon' CD has a been a great favourite among many station hosts, but there seems to be some confusion as to Bing's accompanying orchestra. Musical director Bob Thompsón doesn't get a look in - all the credit going to Geoff 'Mishel Piastro' Love.

REST OF THE RADIO ROUND-UP

Dr. Swing, Mandy Moreton, David Jacobs, Desmond Carrington, Benny Green, Bill Reynolds, Frank Wappat; all record programme hosts who can be relied upon to play Crosby tracks on a pretty regular basis - though some more than others. All have been receiving new CDs, as released, and these and other Bing recordings seem to be popular highlights of their shows. To illustrate just how well educated they are becoming to the wide range of material now freely available - and I use that word deliberately - the following few titles will demonstrate: "You Took Advantage Of Me", "Muddy Water", "Can't We Talk It Over?", "I'm Falling In Love With Someone", "When The Bloom Is On The Sage", "Blue Skies", "I Can't Begin To Tell You", "Talk To The Animals", and a very good selection from both the Palladium Concert release and the United Artists album. Amanda Bowman is a new name to me, playing a track or two and, seemingly, quite taken by The Boss. For after "Melancholy Baby" she gushed, "Ooh, he makes me go all weak and wobbly." Now none of that, Amanda. Not on the air, please!

John Gunn has not had the best of health this year, and occasionally his '78 Vintage' has to be taken over by John Hayes (no contest J.G.). So knowledgeable, and ever ready to play listener requests in his weekly Crosby Corner, John has continued to delve deeply into the Crosby catalogue and come up with some fine material from Bing's very best years. You'll go a long while before you hear "Mary", "One More Time", "With Every Breath I Take" and the "Gus Edwards' Medley" on other, non-biographical, programmes. More likely to be heard elsewhere are "Soon", tracks from the Bregman album, Bing and Rosie from radio, "These Foolish Things" and "Mr. Gallagher And Mr. Shean". Explaining the vaudeville origin of this latter recording John imparted the further snippet of information that Al Shean was an uncle to the Marx Brothers. While we may think we are aware of pretty near all there is to know about Bing, these interesting, lateral diversions expand on that knowledge and fill in little gaps on much of the history of popular music and the artistes of this century that so endears us to Bing and his contemporaries. We wish you well, John.

Bert Bishop

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Here we are again rapidly approaching the end of the year and what a year we've had with some truly marvellous Bing compact discs. I suppose collectors will say that the 50th Anniversary Palladium Concert and the United Artist Sessions from EMI were the highlights of the year, although for me the number one album has to be "Memories" from MCA but then of course I'm biased! I mustn't forget the contributions by Jonzo or the Rosemary Clooney album from Jasmine or 'My Favorite Hymns' from MCA and many more too numerous to mention. All in all we've had a pretty good year. I am sorry to say that I shall be reviewing a number of albums that I am unable to let you know where you can purchase them from or to give you the purchase price. I'm mentioning these in the hope that you will be able to locate some of them. It pays to look in those cheap record shops - it's sometimes surprising what you can find if you look around.

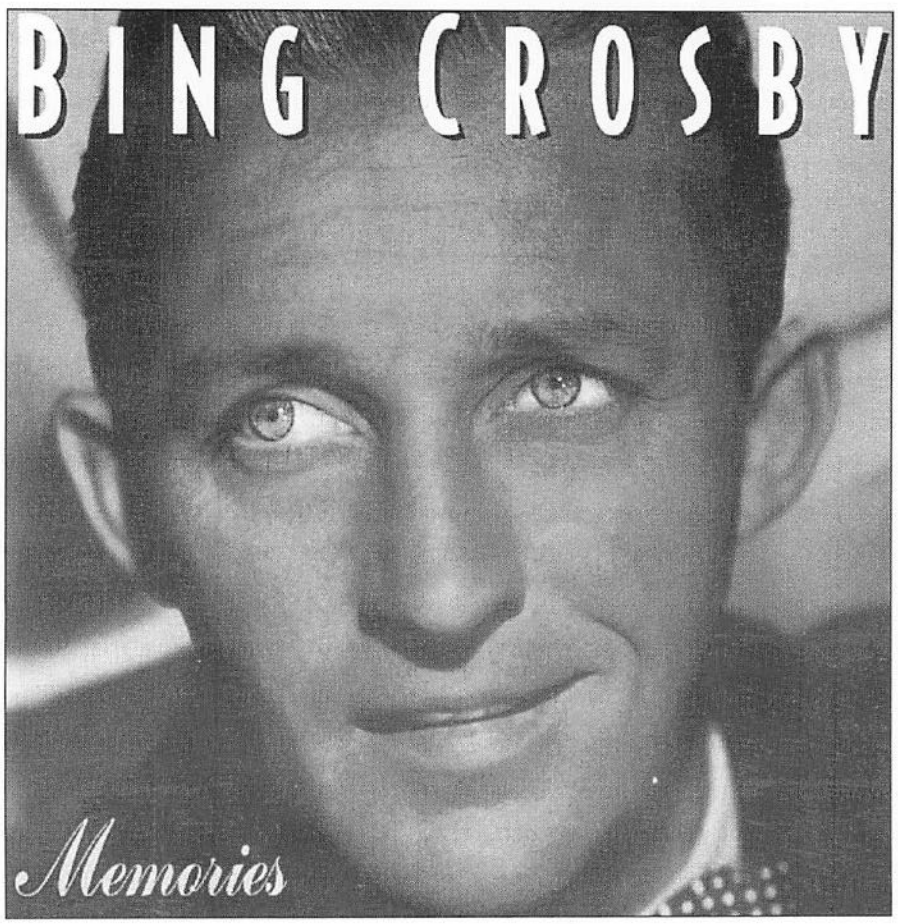
Before starting my reviews, I wish to refer to a letter that appeared in BING 116 when Jim Newell raised the old chestnut of the longevity of CDs which was aired considerably some ten years ago and dismissed as scaremongering. I would also point out that Jim was a little confusing, as his letter started by pointing out these so called problems only

to finish by asking for more material to be released on CD. It doesn't appear that he is over worried himself does it? No offence intended . One could take the cynical view that the record companies and CD manufacturers would be the only ones to gain by hiding the truth, but it strikes me that they would be very silly and short sighted to carry on selling a product that they knew to be short lived as this would soon become apparent. The whole industry has turned away from vinyl and the cassette market is dying on its feet. Recent surveys show that CDs now account for about 70% of sales of recorded music and this share of the market is expected to rise by the turn of the century.

Obviously the life of a particular CD depends on the way it is treated. The early demonstrations of CDs were of course misleading in this respect and almost led one to believe that they would stand up to all sorts of bad treatment such as smothering them in jam, dust and the like. Even with this misleading start there have been no reports of large scale problems with CDs. We are now aware of the need to keep them clean and out of direct strong sunlight and that we should store them properly without subjecting them to huge variations in temperature or humidity. This common-sense approach to their storage also applied to all previous forms of recorded music. In the fourteen years that CDs have been around I have only heard of one batch of a particular CD being called in to be replaced due to a fault in the manufacturing process. If there was a problem with "holes/gaps" causing discs either to not play properly or not at all as Jim quoted surely it would it have come to light by now. I don't want to tempt providence but I have only a had a problem with one of my CDs - "Alexander's Ragtime Band" which has never played on a number of tracks listed on the sleeve and I attributed to a fault in the manufacturing process. I have more than the average size collection of CDs.

The laser that plays a CD makes no contact with the disc surface, but as the disc spins, a microscopic beam of light shines through the protective mirror-like surface to read the digital music code underneath. It therefore is obvious that if this mirror-like underside of the disc is greasy in the form of fingerprints or has dirt on it the beam will be deflected and this can seriously affect the sound produced. Disc manufacturers recommend that only ethyl alcohol cleaning fluid be used for the purposes of cleaning discs and that a few drops only should be applied with a soft cloth to remove greasy fingerprints. A soft cloth can be used on its own to remove dust particles. I understand that CD manufacturers carry out rigid tests to establish how many times a disc can be played in its lifetime, prior to using them for production purposes and I feel very confident in putting my faith in them. I know that all the CDs in my collection still play as well as they did on the day that I purchased them. My confidence extends to the fact that that I have now sold the majority of my record collection and rely almost entirely on my CDs for most of my listening to Bing. We cannot tell what the future may hold but I look forward to listening to my CD collection for many years to come - God willing. Those people who have not converted to CD will unfortunately be the losers as they won't be able to add newly released material to their collections as the CD takes more of the share of the market.

I would welcome the views of anyone more qualified than me to discuss this subject further.



Memories **MCA MCLD 19360 (MCLC 19360 Cassette)** **UK**

When The World Was Young
If You Love Me
In The Good Old Summertime
Walk Me By The River
Lost In Loveliness
I Didn't Slip I Wasn't Pushed I Fell
Indian Summer
The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair
Little Lady Makebelieve
The Four Winds And The Seven Seas
Hello Young Lovers
Whistling In The Wildwood
Why Can't You Behave?
Any Town Is Paris When You're Young
No Other Love
Friendly Mountains
I'll See You In My Dreams
Memories
When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby
Careless Hands
Smile Right Back At The Sun
The Girl Friend
Helpless
Who Gave You The Roses?
A Quiet Girl
Row Row Row

The reference to this being a 20th Anniversary Commemorative album was removed as MCA hope to have the CD in their catalogue for some time. The order of tracks is as shown above and not as in BING 116. Whether I am the right person to review this CD in view of my involvement is a mute point. I consider that the mastering by Ken Barnes and Peter Reynolds has made this an exceptionally high quality album and with 22 tracks new to CD I hope that it will be a must for all members. The songs sound much brighter and the tone of Bing's whistling has been improved - just listen to "I Didn't Slip I Wasn't Pushed I Fell" to see what I mean. All the songs on the album sound better than I have ever heard them before and this includes the tracks where mint condition 78rpm records from Leslie Gaylor's collection were used as masters. MCA didn't have masters for all the titles selected and the 78s saved the day, otherwise six titles would not have appeared on the album. Alan Hodgson of MCA has put together a fine package and the presentation is excellent and he should be congratulated for this and for permitting us to have so much say on this album which for me has been a marvellous and unforgettable experience. Price CD - £9.99 Cassette - £6.49. Running time: 78.22

Great Moments With Bing Crosby And Friends - From The Radio Shows (2CDs) **SPA Intermusic SA OTA 101978** **Portugal**

CD 1 Running Time: 77:33

Theme: Where The Blue Of The Night; Don't Fence Me In w The Music Maids; Moonlight Becomes You; Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive w The Charioteers; Philco Advert; Moonlight Bay w The Charioteers; Hut Sut Song w Connie Boswell; Sleigh Ride In July; It Makes No Difference Now; Amor; Maybe You'll Be There w Peggy Lee; Sentimental Journey w The Charioteers; Where The Blue Of The Night; The Way You Look Tonight w Trudy Erwin; Please; Lazy Bones w Louis Armstrong; It's Always You; Ghost Riders In The Sky; Remember Me; Home On The Range; If I Had My Way w The Charioteers; You Don't Have To Know The Language w The Rhythmaires; I'm Always Chasing Rainbows w Eddie Duchin (piano); Night Train To Memphis w The Charioteers; People Will Say We're In Love w Trudy Erwin; More And More; White Christmas w The Charioteers, The Music Maids And Trudy Erwin

CD 2 Running Time: 72:30

Introduction; Pistol Packin' Mama w The Charioteers; Oh What A Beautiful Morning w Trudy Erwin; Deep In The Heart Of Texas w The Music Maids; Poinciana; Thank Your Lucky Stars w The Music Maids; All My Love (Bolero); Manhattan w Connie Boswell; Now Is The Hour; I've Got A Crush On You w Peggy Lee; Easter Parade w Jeannie Durelle; War Bonds Message; I Used To Love You But It's All Over Now; You've Got Me Where You Want Me w Eugenie Baird; Medley From Mississippi: Down By The River/ It's Easy To Remember/ Soon/ Swanee River; Some Enchanted Evening; Between 18th And 19th On Chestnut Street w Connie Boswell; Loch Lomond w The Music Maids; Put It There Pal w Bob Hope; Whistle While You Work; As Time Goes By; Maybe It's Because w Judy Garland; It's Only A Paper Moon; Kraft Advert; Maria Elena; Paper Doll w The Music Maids; I'll Be Home For Christmas w The Charioteers & The Music Maids; Mona Lisa; Closing: Goodnight Irene w Bob Hope & Judy Garland

All the material is from radio shows with the majority of titles being from KMH. There are some rarities including a full version of "Where The Blue Of The Night" and extracts from the first Philco Show. This is an attractively designed package with very well documented liner notes. Much of the content is making its first appearance on CD and it is a good value double album. There is a small amount of surface noise on some tracks but overall the quality is good and is perfectly acceptable. Price: £11.99

Bing Crosby's Gold Records **MCA MCAD 11719** **USA**

Sweet Leilani
New San Antonio Rose
White Christmas (1942)
Silent Night (1942)
Sunday Monday Or Always
Pistol Packin' Mama w The Andrews Sisters
Jingle Bells w The Andrews Sisters
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Swinging On A Star
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (1944)
I Can't Begin To Tell You
McNamara's Band
South America Take It Away w The Andrews Sisters
Alexander's Ragtime Band w Al Jolson
Whiffenpoof Song
Now Is The Hour
Galway Bay
Dear Hearts And Gentle People
Play A Simple Melody w Gary Crosby
Sam's Song w Gary Crosby

Don't Fence Me In w The Andrews Sisters
Running Time: 62.00
All 21 of Bing's gold records for Decca appear here together for the first time on one CD and the 1942 version of 'Silent Night' makes its debut in this format. Wig Wiggins was again involved with MCA and he has written some excellent sleeve notes. I am not in a position to review the album here and will have to leave this to next time around Should members want copies of this CD I will obtain a small batch but I am unable to tell you how much they will cost until I get them. If you want a copy please contact me.

The Chronological Bing Crosby **Jonzo Records JZCD-14** **UK**

We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines
Temptation (LA68-A)
Temptation (LA69-B)
Our Big Love Scene
Did You Ever See A Dream Walking
Let's Spend An Evening At Home (LA90-A)
Let's Spend An Evening At Home (LA90-B)
Love Thy Neighbour (LA134-A)
Love Thy Neighbour (LA134-B)
Love Thy Neighbour (LA134-C)
Once In A Blue Moon (LA135-A)
Once In A Blue Moon (LA135-B)
Goodnight Lovely Little Lady (LA136-A)
Goodnight Lovely Little Lady (LA136-B)
May I (LA137-A)
May I (LA137-B)
Little Dutch Mill (LA144-A)
Little Dutch Mill (LA144-B)
Shadows Of Love (LA145-A)
Shadows Of Love (LA145-B)
She Reminds Me Of You (LA146-A)
She Reminds Me Of You (LA146-B)
Ridin' Around In The Rain (LA147-A)
Ridin' Around In The Rain (LA147-B)

Running time: 73.45. The latest album in the much admired series from John McNicholas is now available and is up to its usual standard. A nice booklet and great photos as always. The album contains a very rare C take of 'Love Thy Neighbour' which is noticeably different from those we have heard before and in fact sounds like a rehearsal. Price £10.60 including p&p or two for £21 incl. p&p from Jonzo Records PO Box 212 Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. USA and Canadian members can get copies from Wig Wiggins - for address see inside front cover. John is also hoping to issue Jonzo-15 before the end of the year.

Bing Crosby & Louis Armstrong - Havin' Fun **Jazz Unlimited JUCD 2034** **Denmark**

Theme / Introduction: Bing, Peggy Lee, Joe Venuti talking
Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy
I'm Coming Virginia - Peggy Lee
Royal Garden Blues - Louis Armstrong instrumental
Baby Won't You Please Come Home - Jack Teagarden
Blueberry Hill with Louis Armstrong
Lazy Bones with Louis Armstrong
Introduction: Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald talking
Undecided - Ella Fitzgerald
I Get Ideas - Louis Armstrong
Memphis Blues with Louis and Ella Fitzgerald
Chesterfield Song with Louis and Ella Fitzgerald
A Kiss To Build A Dream On with Louis Armstrong
Theme / Introduction: Bing and Louis Armstrong talking
On The Sunny Side Of The Street - Louis Armstrong
Gone Fishin' with Louis Armstrong
Up A Lazy River - Louis Armstrong
Lazy Bones with Louis Armstrong
Rockin' Chair - Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden

The quality is pretty good and I enjoyed listening to this album. All the material is from radio programmes recorded between 1949 -1951 (Tracks 1-7 Chesterfield January 25, 1950, Tracks 8-13 Chesterfield November 28, 1951, Tracks 14-16 Chesterfield April 25, 1951 and Tracks 17-19 Philco March 16, 1949). UK members wanting this CD should be able to obtain it from The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR. Running Time: 61:53 Price £12.25
Note: The liner notes indicate that "Havin' More Fun" is also available on the same label JUCD 2035, but I haven't been able to obtain a copy as yet.

Bing Crosby At The Movies 1943-1945 **Great Movie Themes CD60017** **UK**

I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
On The Sentimental Side
Sing A Song Of Moonbeams
Swinging On A Star
Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive w The Andrews Sisters
Only Forever
The Pessimistic Character (With The Crab Apple Face)
Sweet Leilani
Pennies From Heaven
Moonburn
The Moon Got In My Eyes
Love Is Just Around The Corner
Down By The River
Please
The Bells Of St Mary's
I Wished On The Moon
If I Had My Way
White Christmas
Going My Way
Road To Morocco w Bob Hope

This album came as a pleasant surprise to me, particularly after having heard the first album in this Great Movie Themes series where the quality was pretty poor, due to it being S/T material. This CD has a nice selection of commercial recordings of Bing's film songs and has good quality reproduction. At first glance I thought that there

was nothing new on it but on giving it a closer look I saw that "The Pessimistic Character (With The Crab Apple Face) "was making its first appearance on CD. Running Time: 57:44 Price £5.99

Lounge Legends & Other Stars featuring Bing Crosby **G7 Music G7- CD 9012** **Canada**

True Love w Grace Kelly
Dream A Little Dream Of Me
I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter
Down Among The Sheltering Palms
Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella
I Love You Samantha
Some Sunny Day
Mack The Knife
Little One
Exactly Like You
Mamma Loves Papa
Tell Me
Whispering
Where The Blue Of The Night (1945)
Swinging On a Star
White Christmas (1947)

I am indebted to Wig Wiggins for giving me details of this CD which was sent to him by an ICC member in Canada. The album has an amazing title (where did they dig that up from?) but has a lot going for it in other respects as it includes 10 of the tracks from the "Bing With A Beat" album and I am told that the quality is very good. I regret that I can't tell you where to get it from or how much it would cost you. If I hear any more about the availability of album, I'll report in the next issue of BING.

Bing Crosby (2CDs) **Newsound Essential Collection PYCD 252** **UK**

Disc 1 Running Time: 45:04

Swinging On A Star; Trade Winds; San Antonio Rose; Dinah; I Love You Truly; Sweet Georgia Brown; You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me; Temptation; Too Marvellous For Words; May I; June In January; With Every Breath I Take; I'm An Old Cowhand; Pennies From Heaven; Mr Gallagher And Mr Shean; You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby; Sunday Monday Or Always; Sierra Sue

Disc 2 Running Time: 54:33

The White Cliffs Of Dover; Army Air Corps Song; Yankee Doodle Dandy; I Don't Want To Walk Without You; Song Of Freedom; You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To; What Do You Do In The Infantry; Riding Herd On A Cloud; The Road To Victory; Sunday Monday Or Always (version 2); Vict'ry Polka; It's All Over Now; As Time Goes By; I'll Be Seeing You; Shoo Shoo Baby; There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight; The Bombardier Song; Long Ago And Far Away

I recently came upon this double album in a local budget price CD / video shop, although it was issued last year. This appears to be a combination of two previous issues "Swingin' On A Star" Musketeer MUCD9515 (26 tracks) and "Those Great World War II Songs" (18 tracks from this album, all on Disc 2). The quality is very good with Disc 1 containing commercially recorded material and Disc 2 radio material. I don't honestly know where you can get this album. Price £4.99

The Christmas Album **MCA Records MCBD 19537** **UK**

White Christmas
Santa Claus Is Coming To Town w The Andrews Sisters
It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
Christmas Is A Comin'
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Twelve Days Of Christmas w The Andrews Sisters
Adeste Fideles
You're All I Want For Christmas
Silver Bells w Carol Richards
Little Jack Frost Get Lost
I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
The Christmas Song
The First Noel
Sleigh Ride
Jingle Bells w The Andrews Sisters
O Fir Tree Dark
The Snowman
Christmas In Killarney
Silent Night
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Here Comes Santa Claus w The Andrews Sisters
Is Christmas Only A Tree?
Auld Lang Syne

MCA sent me a copy of their liner notes so that I could include details of this album in this issue. I don't know how much it will cost but I think that it will be budget priced as it will most probably only go on sale in Woolworth's. It is interesting to see 'Auld Lang Syne' on a UK CD for the first time. I expect most members will realise that this is edited from Bing's "Happy Birthday - Auld Lang Syne" recording from 1947 with Victor Young & His Orchestra and The Ken Darby Singers. This is a very pleasant album with a nice selection of Christmas titles from "Mr Christmas" himself and is probably the most comprehensive collection of Bing's Christmas songs currently available on CD.

The Bing Crosby Christmas Special **Your Hit Parade YHP1 (Cassette YP1MC)** **UK**

Introduction
Adeste Fideles
Jingle Bells
I Dream Of You (More Than You Dream
Silent Night
Don't Fence Me In
Straighten Up And Fly Right - The Charioteers
More And More

I Do) - Eugenie Baird
I'm Making Believe
A Slip Of The Lip (Can Sink A Ship) - The Charioteers
What A Difference A Day Made
Beautiful Saviour - Kraft Choral Society
God Is Ever Beside Me - Kraft Choral Society
(All Of A Sudden) My Heart Sings - Eugenie Baird
Can't You Hear Me Calling, Caroline? - Jerry Colonna
Holiday Inn Medley:
Let's Start The New Year Right / Abraham/
Easter Parade / Be Careful It's My Heart/ White Christmas

The material all comes from KMH Shows of the 21st and 14th December 1944 and is almost identical to 'WW II Radio Christmas Shows' (Laser Light 12 310) that was released in 1994. The quality is excellent and the front sleeve has a nice photograph of Bing with artificial snowfall which nicely depicts the Christmas feeling. This is a relatively new record company and this is their first try at a Bing album. Mind you Bing doesn't appear to go hand-in-hand with the other artists in their catalogue although from our point of view we must give them full marks for beginning to have the right approach. It's just a pity that that they haven't started with something new. Of course if you missed the Laser Light disc this CD is still a must. The company have agreed to give members a discount and the CD can be obtained by writing and making your cheques payable (CD £7.99 and Cassette £4.99) to: New Millennium Communications Ltd, 6 Langley Street, Suite 43, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9JA
Running Time: 52.16 Members Discount Price incl. p&p: CD £7.99 Cassette: £4.99 Shop Prices: £9.99 & £6.99

I don't think that this 1994 album is still available, but I include it here as it has never previously been reviewed in BING.

A Crosby Christmas **Castle Communications CXMAS 12** **Australia**

White Christmas (1942)
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Silent Night (1947)
Adeste Fideles
Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
The First Noel
The Christmas Song
Here Comes Santa Claus w The Andrews Sisters
Jingle Bells w The Andrews Sisters
Twelve Days Of Christmas
Christmas Carols:
Deck The Halls/Away In A Manger/I Saw Three Ships
Good King Wenceslas/We Three Kings Of Orient Are/
Angels We Have Heard On High
Santa Claus Is Coming To Town
It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
A Crosby Christmas w Gary, Phillip, Dennis And Lindsay
Deck The Halls/That Christmas Feeling/I'd Like
To Hitch A Ride With Santa Claus / The Snowman
That Christmas Feeling
Is Christmas Only A Tree?
White Christmas (1947)
Let's Start The New Year Right
Auld Lang Syne

I had never come across this album until I took over the CDs from the late Derek Parkes' estate with the view of selling them. At first I thought that we had a real find to see the 1942 versions of 'White Christmas' and 'Silent Night' issued for the first time on CD. Unfortunately when listening to it I find that the 'Silent Night' version is the 1947 one so if you want the'42 version you will need to purchase the "Bing Crosby's Gold Records" CD reviewed above.. The quality of the album is very good and to my knowledge this was the first appearance on CD of "Auld Lang Syne".

Bob Hope **Deja Vu DVGH 710-2** **UK**

Penthouse Serenade w Shirley Ross
Thanks For The Memory w Shirley Ross
Two Sleepy People w Shirley Ross
The Lady's In Love With You w Shirley Ross
Put It There Pal w Bing
Road To Morocco w Bing
Road To Morocco w Bing and Dorothy Lamour
Road To Bali w Bing
Merry-Go-Run-Around w Bing and Peggy Lee
Hoot Mon w Bing
Chicago Style w Bing
Wing Ding Tonight
Buttons And Bows
How D'Ya Like To Love Me w Martha Raye
You're The Top w Bing and Frank Sinatra

The quality of this CD is not bad but, it doesn't quite come up to the high standard of the "Bob Hope & Friends" album MCAD-10611 which has most of the Bing tracks that are included here. "Road To Morocco" with Bing and Dorothy Lamour is probably from a Philco show and "You're The Top" with Bing and Frank Sinatra is also from radio. Fellow member Gwen Harvey was kind enough to give me the details of this CD. I am sorry that I can't tell where you can obtain it from but assume that it wouldn't be very costly to purchase.

Guest Appearances:

Louis Armstrong At MGM Now You Has Jazz **Turner Classic Movies** **USA**
25 Tracks (3 Bing) Little One, I Love You Samantha and Now You Has Jazz

Paul Whiteman & his Orchestra **Javelin Promotions CWN CD 2030** **EC**
16 Tracks (3 Bing) Muddy Water, Mississippi Mud and I'm Coming Virginia

Bathing Beauty **Great Movie Themes CD60001** **UK**
This CD has the songs from three films 'Bathing Beauty'; 'Here Comes The Waves' and 'This Gun For Hire'. I have listened to the album and Bing sings the songs from the film, including Acent-Tchu-Ate The Positive and I'll Take The Long Way Home but the quality was very poor and I decided not to get the CD. Price £5.99

Star Spangled Rhythm / Footlight Parade **Great Movie Themes CD60013** **UK**
13 Tracks (1 Bing) Old Glory. The quality is better than Bathing Beauty mentioned above although the Star Spangled Rhythm content is not the same as on Star Spangled Rhythm Sandy Hook CDSH 2045. Price:£5.99
Mary Martin The Decca Years 1938-1946 **MCA Sp Products MSD 35691 (Kotch3-7906-2)** **USA**
16 Tracks (2 Bing) The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid and Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie. *I am told that the quality of this CD is excellent.*
Christmas Memories Your Hit Parade **MCA Sp Products MSD35348(Time Life R-10517) USA**
24 Tracks (2 Bing) White Christmas and I'll Be Home For Christmas
A Bit Of Crosbyana:
Frank Sinatra And Guests The Old Gold Shows (2CDs) **Spa Intermusic SA OTA 101878** **Portugal**
56 Tracks (Frank Sinatra and The Crosby Kids). *I include mention of the double CD here although there is no Bing content because of the very amusing sketch with Frank and Bing's Boys. The overall quality of the material on this double album is not as good as OTA 101978 above. Other guests include Martha Tilton, The Pied Pipers, June Hutton and Frances Langford*

FROM MY CRYSTAL BALL

I have decided that crystal ball gazing is not really my forte, as whenever I mention anything in this section it appears to give it "the kiss of death". In the last issue I mentioned the 'Mike Sings Bing' Album and now sure enough, I hear that this has been shelved for the time being as the other Michael Holliday albums are still selling well (whoops). As a result of my abject failure in this respect, I have now decided to put the Crystal Ball away for the time being.

It doesn't seem possible that we are again fast approaching the end of yet another year - where does the time go? I would therefore like to take this opportunity in wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year for 1998. Once again I must thank all those people who have been kind enough to help me throughout the year by sending me details of CDs. My particular thanks go to Charlie Baillie, Phil Clarke, Bill Daugherty, Leslie Gaylor, Gwen Harvey, Malcolm Macfarlane, Ernest Sutkowski, Stan White, Barry Whittingham and Wig Wiggins. If I have missed anyone please do accept my apologies.

Until next year

Jim Reilly

Eamonn Andrews

Eamonn was a well known British TV personality who had a very successful chat show in the 1960s. We have recently come across a biography about him called simply 'Eamonn Andrews'. Written by Tom Brennand, a colleague of Eamonn's at ITV, the book was first published by George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd in 1989.

The author describes how Eamonn refused to meet the guests before the show and continues as follows:

"Whatever the reason, his rule caused the production team some embarrassment as we tried to explain it to protesting celebrities who expected at least the courtesy of a welcoming handshake from their host when they arrived. It also led to some memorable moments.

One involved some Bing Crosby. When Eamonn met him for the first time it was on the show itself and Crosby was, of course, wearing his toupee. But had he met Crosby beforehand he would have realised that he only wore the wig when he was in front of an audience - probably because he was an extremely careful man who saw no point in subjecting the hairpiece to unnecessary wear.

After the programme Crosby went to make-up and removed the toupee. Then I took him back to the hospitality room where the other guests, their relatives and friends, and the programme team, Eamonn included, were already having drinks. For a while Crosby and I stood chatting close to where Eamonn, cigar in one hand, large whisky in the other - in later years he changed his tipple to gin - was in conversation with Bob Hope, who had also been a guest on the show. After a few minutes Eamonn disengaged himself from Hope and came over to us. Then, to my surprise, he totally ignored the famous crooner but, within his hearing, asked me, "Where's Bing?"

Furtively I indicated the shiny-domed pipe-smoking character standing beside me. Eamonn, however, was now looking around the room and to my increasing embarrassment, he repeated the question. I tried to make him realise with gestures that he was actually standing face to face with the man whom only half an hour before he had introduced on his programme as "a living legend" but now did not even recognise. However, he still failed to understand.

Now he was showing signs of increasing irritation and I thought he was about to scream the question out loud when, to his amazement, the figure beside me began to croon in that unmistakable voice, "Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day..."

And finally the truth dawned on Eamonn, whose face was now turning as red as the night in Crosby's signature tune was blue."

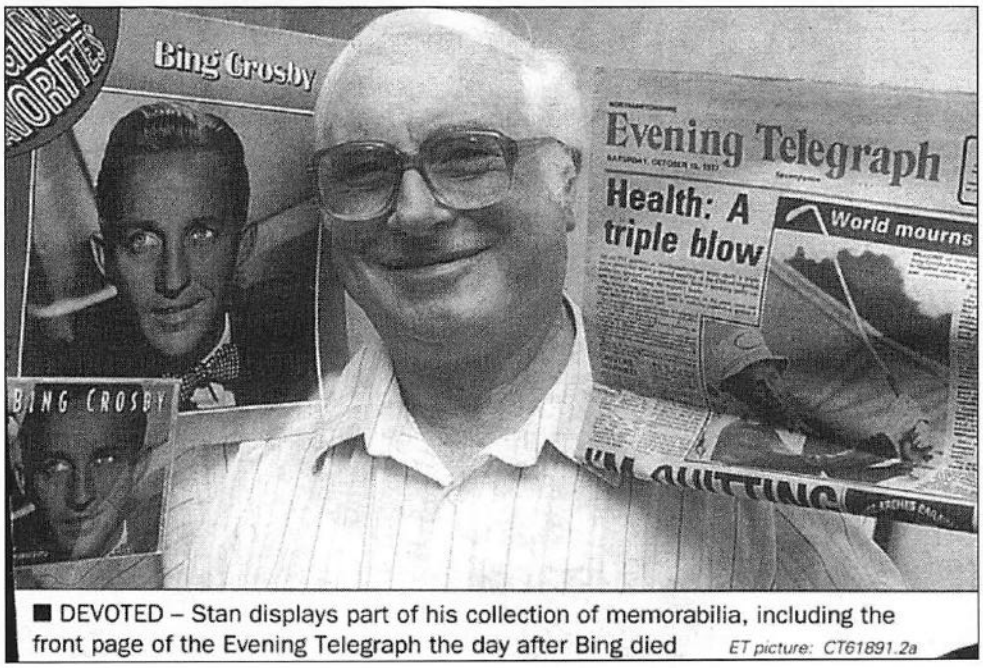
Bing surprises Bob Hope on Eamonn's show of June 4, 1967

The book generally is one of those debunking jobs in the modern tradition - wait until the subject is dead a year or two and then put the boot in. Eamonn died in 1987; this book was written in 1989. Not a character assassination exactly. On the contrary, Eamonn comes across as an innocent abroad and a very saintly one at that. Rather is it a sorry catalogue of professional and social ineptitude on the part of the highest paid star of British television at the time.

Disappointing that the author has to make a cheap jibe about Bing not wanting to wear his toupee out. As we know, Bing hated wearing it and only brought it out for showbiz appearances. Also the story may not be completely accurate. Bing first appeared on the Eamonn Andrews show on June 27, 1965 and the other guests were Spike Milligan, Cilla Black, Patrick Campbell and Harry H. Corbett. His next appearance was on June 4, 1967 when he came on at the end to surprise Bob Hope, who had been the main guest. Bing, Bob and Eamonn played golf the next day at Moor Park. Presumably Bing did not wear his toupee after his 1965 appearance so the story may well relate to that show when Bob Hope was not there.

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

So many press cuttings about Bing in the last few months that it has been difficult to know what to include and what to omit. Stan White and June Manton received some good coverage in the Kettering Evening Telegraph on October 14. Charles LeMieux sent us the most thoughtful article 'Forgetting Bing' from the Chicago Tribune of October 12 whilst The Times of September 26 reviewed the Parkinson show. Finally, the Weekly News carried a nice article about Bing and the ICC.



■ DEVOTED – Stan displays part of his collection of memorabilia, including the front page of the Evening Telegraph the day after Bing died ET picture: CT61891.2a

Stan White seen in the Kettering Evening Telegraph

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOLLYWOOD LEGEND BING'S DEATH

BING CROSBY died 20 years ago this week, appropriately on a golf course, on October 14.

The singer, actor and businessman was a fanatical golfer, as was his pal and co-star in the *Road* movies, Bob Hope.

Their main concern while filming was when they could get off the set and onto the golf course.

Ironically, Bing died just as he and Bob were about to begin filming another *Road* movie entitled *The Road To The Fountain Of Youth.*

"The other six *Road* movies were the biggest-grossing films of any series there has ever been," said Michael Crampton, Secretary and Treasurer of The International Crosby Circle.

That final *Road* film is one of the great might-have-beens for Bing fans, as was his turning down the role of Columbo when the TV series was planned in 1968.

Peter Falk subsequently made the part his own, but it is interesting to think of Bing as the laid-back detective in nifty little hat and using his pipe as a prop.

The International Crosby Circle are commemorating the 20th anniversary at their annual meeting with guests from as far away as Denmark and the USA.

Immediate success

Special guest is Ken Barnes, musician and record producer, who is behind the remastered set of three CDs of the recordings Bing made for United Artists, which has been specially released for this 20th anniversary.

"After Bing's death, we thought interest might fade, but his recordings sell as well as ever," continued Michael. "There are now 250 CDs of Bing available."

The Guinness Book of Records still lists Bing's recording of *White Christmas* as the biggest-selling record to date. Sales exceed 30 million copies.

Bing first sang this classic song in the 1942 film, *Holiday Inn,* and the disc was an immediate success.

Hollywood dedicated a big-budget full-colour movie around it. The all-star production of *White Christmas* was released in 1954 to great acclaim, and subsequently became a TV standard for the festive season.

In the same year, Bing received an Oscar nomination for his performance as the drunken, fading actor husband of Grace Kelly in *Country Girl.* No mean actor, Bing had already won an Academy Award 10 years before for his work in *Going My Way.*

Bing Crosby pictured with another Tinseltown legend, Grace Kelly.

Pop

Forgetting Bing

20 years after deaths, Crosby's ignored while Presley endures

By Howard Reich
TRIBUNE ARTS CRITIC

Hard-edged Frank Sinatra (left) remains the object of constant attention, while mild-mannered Bing Crosby is all but forgotten.

He sold more records than any other pop performer of his day, but Bing Crosby won't exactly inspire a media blitz when the 20th anniversary of his death rolls around next Tuesday.

In fact, it will be amazing if "Entertainment Tonight" or any of the other celebrity TV shows even mentions the man who sold more than 400 million records during a career that spanned nearly a half-century.

Nor will there be tribute concerts, special CD boxed sets or all-night vigils of the sort that honored Elvis Presley's memory last August.

Why does one artist remain an icon while another fades quietly into history? In the case of Crosby and Presley, the answers say a great deal about the mercurial nature of celebrity in America.

On the surface, both Crosby and Presley would seem destined for immortality, if only because of the nature and magnitude of their achievements. The two singers, in fact, had more in common than the casual observer might have guessed: Both attained phenomenal success by absorbing elements of black music and selling it to white audiences (Crosby borrowing from jazz and swing, Presley from R&B and "race" records); both seduced listeners with appealing — if not particularly virtuosic — vocal work; and both used musical stardom as a springboard to fame in movies and on TV.

Listeners can argue forever which one was the better singer, but it would be difficult to deny which was the more charismatic and electrifying performer — Presley, of course. Ed Sullivan, after all, never had to televise Crosby from the waist up, for fear of shocking middle America with the sight of a thrusting, swiveling pelvis.

Even in his declining years — when an overweight, drug-addled Presley had become an unintentional self-parody — the man's millions of fans hung on his every golden note. His ignominious death simply added to the legend.

Crosby, by contrast, was as bland and harmless a personality as his smoothly unruffled singing suggested. His children may have considered him a tyrannical "Daddy dearest," but as far as the public Crosby went, the man was as dangerous as buttered toast and warm milk.

Easygoing, middle-of-the-road performers, however, do not capture the public fancy — nor mesmerize listeners long after they're gone — quite the way rebellious, self-indulgent, hard-living characters do. Perry Como, Russ Columbo and Dick Haymes all may have been superb vocalists, but who talks or writes about them anymore, except for the most devoted connoisseurs?

Presley, Sinatra, Bobby Darin, Hank Williams and Judy Garland, however, to this day remain the subject of countless books, articles, CD reissues, films, TV movies and souvenir T-shirts. The roller-coaster lives they led perpetually lure new generations to their music.

In the case of Crosby, that's unfortunate, for he sang with a seeming effortlessness that pop crooners have been trying to imitate ever since. His warm and reedy vocals his coy phrasing his pure tone and heartbreaking delivery still stand as models of singing that sounds as natural as speaking.

But Crosby's world began to diminish as early as 1941, with the arrival of a new singing star and teenage heartthrob named Sinatra. By the 1950s, when the scrawny vocalist from Hoboken, N.J., emerged as the most dynamic swing singer (and the most brooding torch singer) in the business, Crosby was on his way toward becoming a relic.

That Sinatra's ring-a-ding-ding lifestyle was more torrid than that of any character he played on screen only added to his legend and further overshadowed his archrival, Crosby.

To those who cherish fine singing in a mostly sentimental manner, Crosby always will loom large. His appearances in dozens of films, most notably the Christmas classic "Holiday Inn" and the "Road" pictures with Bob Hope, will keep Crosby on the late, late show for decades to come.

Even on film, however, Crosby typically came across as the easy-going, warm-hearted figure he played in "Going My Way" (1944); his darker, more brilliant portrayal of an alcoholic singer in "The Country Girl" (1954) was the exception that proved the rule.

So today, most of America regards Crosby as little more than a historic figure from some distant, pre-digital age. With each year, his memory grows dimmer, increasingly overshadowed by Sinatra, Garland and the other superstars whose lives seem as thrilling to behold as their music.

June's daily reminder!

BING Crosby serenaded his way into June Manton's heart 40 years ago.

And he's still making the 61-year-old housewife swoon 20 years after his death.

Mrs Manton, of Oundle Road, Thrapston, is one of Bing's biggest fans.

She is pictured above with her collection of more than 500 of his records, books, CDs, films, posters and photographs.

She said: "I first heard him on the radio in the 1950s.

"I was hooked immediately. His music is just so easy to listen to and relaxing.

"You can never get bored there is so much variety.

"Every day I listen to his songs and watch one of the films.

"My husband Gordon never says anything about it because he likes him too."

But Mrs Manton is unhappy that Bing's life and works are not being celebrated today as widely as they could be.

She said: "When it was the 20th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death earlier this year they played films and had special programmes about him.

"Virtually nothing is being done for Bing and I am disgusted by that.

"He's hardly even getting a mention."

Although Mrs Manton never met Mr Crosby she has been to America twice and met his long-time friend Bob Hope. She has also visited Crosby's grave in Los Angeles.

She said: "There are some of us who are his loyal fans and we are in a club called The International Crosby Circle.

"We have meetings each year and buy and sell memorabilia and records."

E1 picture: C161899-4

I WAS surprised by the article "Sad success for Elton" (September 7). It was stated that Elton John's new version of *Candle In The Wind* was expected to outstrip the 3.5 million sales by Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas*. The article claimed that this was ". . . the biggest seller in history"

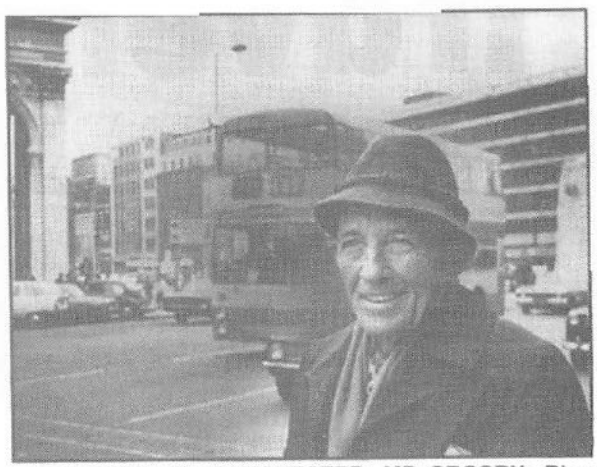
I assume that history only goes back 10 years for the researcher who put this together. In 1942, Bing Crosby recorded Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* with John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra. By 1988, sales of Crosby's recording had gone beyond 90 million, according to statistics officially approved by copyright administration. From these statistics it is apparent Elton John has a long way to go if he is to have the biggest selling single in history.

LACHLAN McLEAN
Oatley

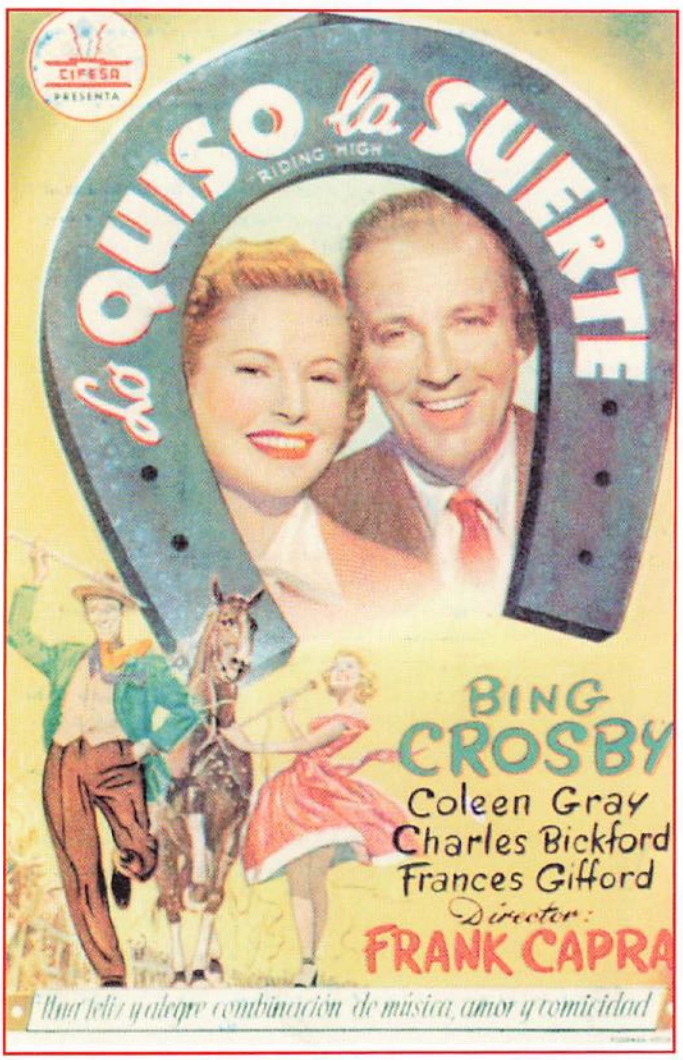
Bing Crosby is on song (BBC1, 10.20pm)

Parkinson: the Interviews
BBC1, 10.20pm

The normally expansive and relaxed Parkinson displays some unusual body language during this 1972 chat to Bing Crosby. His arms are crossed over his chest and his knees are pressed together. Whether this means that Parky was nervous in front of the man who was one of the biggest draws in showbiz for 50 years or if he just did not warm to him, he is not saying. Bing offers us an array of gentle anecdotes of musicianly japes, Bob Hope and golf, interspersed with gentle songs and gentle film clips. If one gets bored (and one should not) there is always the "He Was On My Radio Show" game, where Bing, asked to comment on anyone at all, will eventually utter this line somewhere in the proceedings. The interview with Bette Midler, which was supposed to be shown tonight, was considered too raunchy for a nation in mourning. It shows next week. **Frances Lass**



■ WELCOME TO MANCHESTER, MR CROSBY: Bing in St Peter's Square shortly before his death in 1977



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